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Career Counseling Report

Project title:	**Innovative Response for Facilitating Young Refugees Social Support**
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Relevant IO Title:	**IO_4 - PILOT IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNSELING/GUIDANCE**
Sub-title:	**Report of career counseling procedure**
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Name of the Career Counselor: Konstantinos Galazios

Period of the career counseling: **from 19/3/2019 to 11/4/2019**

1. Characteristics of career counseling procedure

The first appointment of the counselor with the refugees/participants of the procedure happened at the middle of April 2019, when the counselor visited them at the classes where Greek Language Courses were taking place.

The counselor had the opportunity to meet them and to inform them about the counseling intervention that they had to participate. He was able to explain them the goals and the three stages of the career counseling process thoroughly and to arrange the first meetings in his weekly calendar. The first meeting was on Tuesday, 19 of March 2019 and the last meeting was Thursday, 11/4/2019. In total, 22 refugees participated and each meeting's duration was approximately 45-50 minutes.

Career counseling procedure includes a close relationship (togetherness) among counselor and counselee, the assessment of barriers and obstacles, the development of alternative ways and goals, the construction of a positive attitude for the future, the creation of sort-term and long-term goals.

During the career counseling procedure the counselor implemented methods focusing on:

a. their individual characteristics,
b. supporting them to reconsider their typical and non-typical skills,
c. obstacles and barriers that each individual has towards his/her educational and/or career path,
d. personal and professional issues facing during their residency in Athens,
e. relating their skills within the national and european context (framework),
f. providing useful and practical information reinforcing their integration process into the greek society,
g. highlighting the need of learning the language of the host country,
h. matching their profile and educational needs with the training programs of EPAS OAED in a reflexivity (self-reflection) way and positive attitude.

The counselor followed techniques that were establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust, active listening, acceptance and encouragement based on the narrative approach, the dialogue, reflection and reflexivity and keeping personal notes accessible to the counselees.

English and Greek languages were used by the counselor. There were many times that the communication between counselor and counselee was shifting from English to Greek to English. Moreover, there were cases that the use of smartphone with internet was needed by the participants in order to use google translator. Also, in one case it was necessary to have a translator / help by a participant who was speaking the native language of the counselee.

2. Stages of Career Counseling procedure

As it has been mentioned above three (3) sessions per person were mandatory to be attended by the participants in this procedure. The **first** session was about "personal and professional review" and needs analysis, the **second** was focusing on "personal and professional development" and skills assessment and the **third** session was related mostly with their educational needs based on "the programs of EPAS OAED and details for the e-portfolio" of "Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals". All the above modules were common for all the participants.

In the first session "personal and professional review", the counselor with the counselee tried to uncover the social, cultural, professional background/profile of the latest by examining individual, educational, social, labour factors. Analytically, hand-notes exist per each participant structured by:

1. Full Name
2. Ethnicity
3. Age
4. Condition of their registry issues (in Greece)
5. Unemployment Card (from OAED)
6. Education level - Certifications - Diplomas (in their origin country and later on in other countries)
7. Languages
8. Digital skills
9. Working/Professional Experience
10. Interests / Other Activities (hobbies, participation in groups etc.)
11. Supporting network (in Greece and/or family in their origin country)

Often, the first session was finishing by asking them to find five (5) words that characterize themselves and in this way to start thinking about themselves.

The second session was focusing mostly on the needs of the participants towards self- awareness and recognition of their skills and capabilities.

At this stage, the counselees had the chance to refer to the following issues/fields:

- Interests (What does really attract 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?)
- Values (What is important for me?)
- Wishes and needs relevant to the career (What do I want? Where would I want to be?)

The exploration of self-esteem of the counselees was combined with the personal meaning that each one of them has towards their career path: career choices and the lifelong relationship of the individual with formal education. The investigation of meaning at work and in educational systems shed light at their possible choices towards the different trajectories that can be followed studying at EPAS OAED.

In the third session, the goal was firstly, the counselees to understand that their interests correspond to specific professions. Many counselees were able to make clear a profession that could follow or to select some possible career/educational paths. Secondly, we tried to make a first action plan by using the outputs of the second session and their educational needs and matching them with the programs of EPAS OAED. Thirdly, the counselor took into account the sections of the "Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals". The purpose was to fulfill all the possible details for each counselee regarding formal qualifications, non-formal and informal learning that can be validated. Moreover advices have been given on priorities for further training or finding a job.

In the whole procedure the counselor had a supporting role towards counselees (a) presenting many possible prospects that can be opened, (b) providing them with specific information about labour market, career and educational trends and (c) developing new perspectives and alternative solutions. This attitude in the career counseling intervention is estimated important and crucial towards the counselees in order the latest to make the most suitable decisions.

3. Challenges and difficulties in the career counseling procedure working with refugees

✦Friendly and open attitude towards the new and the different is needed in order to overcome barriers and obstacles during the interaction among counselor and counselee.
✦To provide stable and clear schedule of the meetings.
✦Ability to understand the other and their integration issue that they could face. (It is important the counselor to have a broader knowledge concerning the integration process of a refugee and its condition of their registry issues).
✦Ability to communicate and to shift languages concerning the needs of the counselee.
✦A very important issue is the notion that they have about their skills, how to recognize them, to speak about them and to relate with specific professions. It was hard for many of the counselees to speak about themselves and to uncover their strong and positive characteristics that they have. The sense is like a cultural gap exists towards speaking and presenting their skills, especially their soft skills.
✦Many of the participants they do not have a supporting network in Greece based on family relationships but the majority of them is connected with people of their countries, with NGOs, with volunteers in NGOs, and very few with locals.
✦The most of the counselees appeared optimistic about their future. They expressed that they want to stay in Greece and to study or to work and study together!
✦One main issue that some of the participants are facing is that they have studied something (like Journalism or France-African Literature or Law) in their origin country but it is difficult their diplomas to be recognized in Europe (mostly for refugees coming from African countries and do not have embassies in Greece).

Ethnicity & training preference of the participants in the career counseling procedure			
	Name	**Ethnicity**	**Training preference**
1	MAKSIMILIAN LUKU	Albanian	Technical
2	BASSEL BATTAL	Kurdish	Technical & Hair Cutting
3	EHSAN ALMASRY	Syrian	not sure
4	EZZATOULAH EHSANI	Afghanistan	Touristic, Hair Cutting
5	EHTISHAM MASHWANI	Pakistan	Nursing, Touristic
6	LAURENT KABORE	Burkina Faso	Touristic
7	USMAN KHAN	Pakistan	Technical, Engineering
8	ASHIM GOPE	Bangladesh	Cook school
9	MOHAMED MOUFID	Moroccan	Touristic
10	MOHAMED AL DHIR	Syrian	Cook school
11	SHIYAR SHAMO	Syrian	Hair Cutting
12	HADY SYLLA	Guinea	Touristic
13	AHMAD OTHMAN	Syrian	Computer Engineer
14	MOHAMED SULEIMAN	Pakistan	Technical (but not sure)
15	FADIGA SIDIKA	Guinea	Touristic
16	SIDLAWINDE IDRISSA SAWADOGO	Burkina Faso	Technical or cook school
17	VICKY MASENGU-MPINDA	Congo	Hair Cutting, Nurse
18	MOHAMED RASHID SULTANPOORI	Afghanistan	Technical, Engineering (not sure)
19	MOHAMED ASLAM SULTANPOORI	Afghanistan	Cook school
20	OUMAR DIOGO DIALLO	Guinea	Touristic
21	YAYA KANE	Ivory Coast	Maybe Touristic (not sure)
22	GHIASI FAHIM	Afghanistan	Handcrafts, Not sure