

Guidance in the Workplace

Transfer of Innovation to Develop Guidance to those in Employment

Evaluation Report 2 – Developing the networks

November 2008



Education and Culture



Project Partners

Sweden:

**CFL (Centre for Flexible Learning)
municipality of Söderhamn**

www.cfl.soderhamn.se



Italy:

Aster Scienza Tecnologia Impresa

www.aster.it



Romania:

Fundatia Centrul Educational Soros

www.sec.ro



Slovenia:

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

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PIA. Velenje

www.pia.si



France:

**Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan
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www.cibcarras.org



www.guidanceintheworkplace.eu

Introduction

The Guidance in the Workplace project is a transfer of innovation project which aims to transfer learning about different ways of offering advice and guidance to those in employment. This means advice and guidance which can be integrated into the workplace. This can be done by guidance workers liaising with employers, trade union representatives, training managers and human resource managers. One key angle of the project is to develop training for counsellors providing advice. The project runs from the 1st of November 2007 until the 31st of October 2009. For more information on the partners participating please see www.guidanceintheworkplace.eu.

These are the three main assumptions which have been taken into account before the start of the project:

- That guidance can make a major contribution to the development of lifelong learning for those within employment by encouraging those in employment to take up learning opportunities
- That guidance is not always easily accessible to those in employment as for example those who are unemployed
- For advice and guidance to make a contribution to the development of lifelong learning within employment, it is essential that advice and guidance is not provided in isolation

The Guidance in the Workplace project aims to create new knowledge among the participating partners and other participants. The outcomes of a prior Leonardo project, Guidance Merger, will be used, as well as new input from the participating countries (www.guidancemerger.org). The experience from Guidance Merger was that it is very difficult for guidance counsellors alone to gain access to employer's premises without assistance from other organisations. It was clearly seen that workplace counselling needs a long term relationship with the employer. It is important to "open doors" to get in to the premises and this was done liaising with other organisations, already performing work in the companies. How this was done, and which organisation the co-operation was initiated with differed in the partner countries. Their traditions and historical background vary and suitable partners to co-operate with must be seen in the light of each country's history or tradition. The majority of the partner countries in Guidance Merger teamed up with organisations in the field of workforce development, including in some cases trade unions, which had an ongoing, established co-operation with the employers. In this way the service could be effective, simple and accessible for the firms.

The Report

The aim of the report is to show how the project sits within the partner organisations and how the work in finding co-operating partners in their respective countries/regions is coming along. This part of the evaluation report depicts some of the difficulties in finding such a partner in order to "get in" to the companies so that advice and counselling can be given.

The project evaluation has an interactive approach where research is being done together with not on the participants. This report is built on the answers from partners to research questions that have been sent out prior to the Söderhamn meeting (attachment 1). The research done before the Söderhamn meeting aimed to investigate the status of the project within the partner's own organisation and to identify problems and solutions in building a network. The answers were discussed and analysed at the Söderhamn meeting. Furthermore the evaluation report builds on notes taken at the Söderhamn meeting, including notes from a study visit at a company. Two interviews, one with a vocational teacher and another with a guidance counsellor at CFL, Söderhamn complete the material used in the report.

The Guidance in the Workplace Project within Partner Organisation

There are bound to be initial problems when initiating a project. The project needs to be communicated within its own organisation, both to management, the board of directors and the staff before the work to identify and build networks with other organisations can begin. We wanted to find out if the projects were well established in their home organisations before looking for co-operating partners. If the projects are to make an impact, the home organisation is the starting point. Research¹ has shown that one important prerequisite is that management is well informed and actively inquires about the progress of the project. Overall the projects are perceived to have an important role in the respective organisations. However, as time has progressed, a few problems have occurred in two of the partner countries. In France, the partner organisation (CIBC ARTOIS TERNOIS), a regional actor, is undertaking an extensive re-organisation. The Guidance in the Workplace project will have a place in the re-organized organisation, but it will take longer than expected to build the network to get in to the workplaces. Guidance counsellors from CIBC will be taking part in the project, but they are not, for the main part, experienced with working directly with employers. The coordination of the project has been re-assigned to another member of the staff.

In Italy the partner organisation (ASTER) is a regional actor that participated in the Guidance Merger project. They too have undertaken a change in their business strategy. They no longer work directly with companies and are now focusing their work on individuals with an academic degree. They will be able to once again test guidance in the workplace during the Guidance in the workplace project, but they see no possibility in the immediate future to continue doing so. In ASTER there are three people directly involved in the project. The administration board of ASTER is informed about the project, but due to the re-organisation the project no longer has a central position within the organisation although top management is directly involved in the project. The overall feeling is that the project is sufficiently supported by the management, colleagues and administration board.

The partner organisations in Romania, Slovenia and Sweden have the same structure in their organisations as when they entered the Guidance in the Workplace Project. In Romania, where the partner (SOROS) is a local/regional actor, the general feeling is that management is very much involved in the project. Those directly working with the project are one program coordinator and one member of the board of directors. The management is informed regularly and the support for the project is perceived as sufficient by those working in it. Most colleagues are teachers and are as such not involved in the project.

In Sweden a local/regional actor (CFL), one of the "old" partners, the promoter of the transnational Guidance in the Workplace project is directly working with the project. Guidance and counselling in workplaces are being done by CFL staff. This is a part of the learning centre's strategy (see second part of this report- "The Söderhamn meeting").

In Slovenia a national institution is the partner (SIAE). As an institute for adult education the project fits well into their agenda and efforts can be combined with other projects within the organisation. Two people are currently working in the project. One is a senior advisor at the SIAE and one has her daily work in the development of guidance in adult education. The other staff and management are regularly informed about the project. The support for the project is adequate, as it is central to the daily issues of SIAE.

¹ Svensson, L; Aronsson, G.; Randle, H. & Eklund, J. (2007). Hållbart arbetsliv – projekt som gästspel eller strategi i långsiktig utveckling: Malmö: Gleerups.

The Development of Networks

Italy

The development of a network or system so that services to the workplace can be delivered, is underway in the Guidance in the Workplace project. The systems or network will vary in each country. First we will describe the position for each partner. Then we will discuss problems that have occurred in organising the network or system. Due to the difficulties occurring when ASTER changed its business strategy, described above, project management decided to involve a group of experts belonging to different organisations (trade unions, research institutes, guidance associations, universities, etc.) which ASTER has had prior co-operation with and that have a good reputation among companies as researchers or as consultants for outplacement issues. The aim for the co-operating organisations is to influence the culture of guidance within workplace. This will be combined with offering guidance in some workplaces locally. Some of the experts are involved at national level, in CEDEFOP research. They have activated a network of companies that are interested in guidance issues. The network of medium-large enterprises will be contacted, and the companies included in the network could become “positive examples” for other companies. The companies that have showed high interest in counselling matters will be asked to participate in the Guidance in the workplace project.

France

In France the network building was a bit delayed by the time of the Söderhamn meeting. This due to the re-organisation of CIBC described above. The plan is to involve the guidance counsellors within their own organisation and to go directly to companies in the region. To be able to do so, training is needed. The counsellors are for the most part not accustomed to dealing directly with employers. The counsellors need to develop contact with company management.

Romania

SOROS has made contact with a number of organisations, both regionally and nationally. This has all been done by the help of the Harghita county Employment Agency. There is a written agreement between SOROS and the county employment agency. The contacts, made by email, had by the time of the Söderhamn meeting resulted in contact data and information about their local and regional contacts with SME:s and other entities. It is mainly employment agencies that have shown an interest. Some of them need help to get into the work places. The national project management feels that continuous work need to be done. The overall aim for the Guidance in the Workplace project is far from the practice in Romania. The guidance counsellors need to be convinced of the benefits from working closer to employers. The partner feels that contacts established so far need to be developed further so that a co-operation in practice will take place. Also approaching companies there are a few obstacles to be seen. In general, Romanian companies are perceived as only beginning to see how they can benefit from human relation management. This will undoubtedly make it harder to get in to provide advice and guidance in the workplace than is the case in many other European countries. The Guidance in the Workplace project is therefore seen as especially important, as it could contribute to draw human relation management to the company management's attention. To do so a co-operating partner who focuses in human relations has been linked to the project. This is an established contact that has been linked to SOROS prior to the project.

Slovenia

The Slovenian partner has cooperated with two networks. The first is Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije - ZSSS), who also provided a written statement of support when the project application was made. The second network is 14 regional guidance centres for adult education. The concrete approach of guidance in the workplace will be tested in three regions - Koper, Maribor, Novo mesto.

The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia has 22 affiliated branch trade unions and more than 300.000 members from both, private and public sectors. Main issue areas are: economy, wage policy, social policy, workers' participation, health and safety at work, equal opportunities, trade union education, legal security, international cooperation, trade unions and youth. Trade union representatives, who are members of one of the 22 sector unions forming the ZSSS network, work directly in the companies. SIAE:s cooperation with the ZSSS has so far been through the ZSSS leadership, especially through the education manager on the national level and the newly established contacts with regional ZSSS representatives. Union representatives will be additionally trained to provide information and guidance at workplace.

Regional guidance centres for adult education operate in 14 Slovenian regions. The centres provide guidance and counselling to adults and connect education and guidance providers in the area. The SIAE has developed the unified concept of guiding centres and continues to monitor and develop guidance activities in them.

Another important Slovenian co-operating partner in the Guidance in the Workplace project in will be the adult education guidance networks, which are a part of each of the 14 centres. The aim is to strengthen the cooperation between the guidance centres and the companies in their respective regions, since the analyses show that this cooperation is underdeveloped. The feeling is that especially small and medium sized companies can benefit from getting guidance support for their employees "from outside", since they on most parts do not have HR-departments.

Considering the various roles that different partners have in the local community, they are divided into two groups within the guidance network, strategic partners and professional partners with specific tasks.

Sweden

CFL tries to work with the local and regional companies on a daily bases, but here challenges are also seen. As the regions learning centres they already have established contacts within company networks, the local employment agency and with some trade unions. Nevertheless these contacts constantly need to be sustained. CFL has found it more difficult to get in to smaller businesses, but by letting vocational teachers and guidance counsellors make contacts on other issues; they have found that the companies will turn to CFL for advice when they need it. It is then often in cases concerning individual employers. In the next section of this report there will be a summary of two interviews made at CFL, which will describe this more closely. After the section on the Söderhamn meeting we report a few problems that have occurred in the national projects and what has been learned along the way. Before this report continues to describe the work of the national projects, the first training and second partner meeting in Söderhamn will be presented.

The Söderhamn Meeting

The Söderhamn meeting was a combined partner meeting and training. All partner countries were represented; the promoter, co-ordinator and evaluator of the transnational project were there. Two of the partner countries, Slovenia and Romania brought persons from their networks. Five CFL staff attended the meeting. The meeting consisted of a discussion on the research questions and the results so far in each of the national projects. There was a study visit to a company involved in the Guidance merger project, where CFL has provided guidance and counselling as well as courses. The summary from the study visit is the first piece of material from the meeting. The second piece of material is a summary of two interviews with two of the CFL staff that attended the Söderhamn meeting and accompanied the other participants to the study visit.

Study Visit at Vallvik

Vallvik belongs to the Rottneros Group which has its head office in Upplands Väsby, close to Stockholm. The company president, HR-department representative of the Vallvik pulp mill, CFL-staff and a regional trade union representative attended the meeting together with partners and participants from Slovenia, France, Romania and Sweden.

Vallvik has gone from manual work to highly automated work in the last 20 years. Hence, a reduction of employees from 440 to 181 (production 94, maintenance 76, the rest laboratory and administration). Some new staff has been recruited, so there was a need to outpace more than shown in the figures. To be employed at Vallvik 12 years of formal education, preferably with a technical profile, is needed. There is a need to educate and train new and old staff mainly because of technology development.

It is hard to plan education and training for a small company. That is why the CEO expressed that he was happy to work with CFL. CFL helps planning and organizing training and education for operators, maintenance and administrative staff. The CEO says:

“Training is one of the key questions in being successful as a company.” (CEO, Vallvik).

CFL has assisted the pulp mill company to structure education and training for employees. The company has also offered training for unemployed people. The unemployed have then attended classes at CFL once a week, and received training at the pulp mill the other four days of the week. There is a general feeling at the mill that the formal education/learning at CFL helps the participants in understanding specific training taking place in the mill. There were no guarantees for the individual to be recruited after the training, but some have found new jobs at the mill (and other mills). At first the management of the mill was a bit reluctant to take in too many unemployed people, something they now regret. Looking back, it is now clear that the need for more workers was greater than they had expected. The pulp mill also takes in trainees from an upper secondary technical school. This is also done in co-operation with CFL.

For the already employed staff at the pulp mill, courses were developed in conjunction with CFL. In planning courses the prior experience and level of learning of the staff was taken into account. An onsite co-ordinator is very important, the CEO says. Two CFL staff has more or less regularly visited the mill. One is a vocational teacher and one is a guidance counsellor. They work with the company’s HR manager and report to the CEO. The planning of staff training is prepared jointly. Thus, CFL helps the company to structure the training.

“They [the CFL-staff] can give support and keep the practical and theoretical training together.” (CEO, Vallvik)

“Especially small companies need someone to put it together.” (CEO, Vallvik)

To carefully plan the future is another key for success for a company, the CEO says. The role of the guidance counsellor and the vocational teacher is then somewhat different from the conventional role. As one

counsellor put it – “it is not about sitting at your desk all day, it’s about going out talking to employers. It’s a different job”. The counsellor makes study plans and the vocational teacher plans the pedagogical part of the courses.

The initial contact with Vallvik was via a European Social Fund project in work place learning. The co-operation was fruitful and it has now developed into a long-term co-operation between the two. Both parties consider themselves as winners. The mill receives help in making plans and structuring courses and training for their staff and CFL has, as they put it, “a reliable partner’ who provides vocational training for upper secondary students and, if needed, for unemployed people.

“It is a give and take situation, but we have been too far away from the workplaces before and it has not been easy to open doors.” (CFL staff)

“One crucial thing is that I have the full co-operation with the CEO ... If they don’t like what is going on, nothing happen.” (CFL staff)

After a walk around the premises and a presentation from the CEO at Vallvik and a HR-manager, the discussion was free. Below are some glimpses of the conversation, on the most part as answers to questions asked:

- The level of training and formal education has no (or little) connection with level of salary at the mill.
- The employer decides when the training or studying takes place during working hours – flexibility was a key word mentioned.
- The law in Sweden states that an employed person is always entitled to a leave of absence for studies (no limit in years).
- The communication with the employees about the training and studying was verbal and through the company intranet. It was done jointly by CFL and the mill HR-department
- It took a long time to find the right people to train – it was slow in the beginning and the employees were reluctant and maybe a bit suspicious. It took three year before it was broadly accepted.
- Trade unions are informed and support the work. Trade unions are very strong within the pulp industry.
- The company has to be developed and profitable before you can invest in training.
- Training and study in the workplace is not regulated by law in Sweden. It is regulated in collective agreements, nationally or locally, between employers and trade unions.
- When it comes to training staff at Vallvik, the agreement is mainly made between the trade union representatives and the company and not so much on an individual basis.

The Role of a Guidance Counsellor and a Vocational Teacher at CFL in Söderhamn, Sweden

This is a summary from two interviews made a week after the study visit. The guidance counsellor and the vocational teacher were both present at the Söderhamn meeting.

Traditionally the role of a guidance counsellor in adult learning centres in Sweden has been to give information to students and other adults, individually or in groups. This is also the case at CFL in Söderhamn. Most of the guidance counsellor’s work still is about giving information, often individually in scheduled and unscheduled meetings. However, the role of guidance counselling is shifting towards one with more active contact with employers. The guidance counsellor, often together with a vocational teacher, makes contact with employers more often then they used to at CFL. The initial contacts are made personally and they are often unannounced. The staff of CFL has found that the first contact made by informal, unannounced meetings with employers is more fruitful than trying to make the first contact by email or telephone.

Also the role of some vocational teachers is changing at CFL. Vocational teachers are now helping companies to plan for the future. They offer and give help, especially to larger companies' HR departments when competence mapping of and study plans for employees are made. Once the first contact is made and a successful co-operation has helped established a relationship, it is easy for a company representative to pick up the phone and ask for help in different matters.

Contacts with an employer can be made for a number of reasons. The most common reason for the counsellors and vocational teachers at CFL to make new contacts with employers is to find trainee positions for students. In smaller companies this might not result in immediate co-operation, but the company's owner or top management will know where to turn when they for example need assistance with courses for all employees or individuals, in planning staff, in evaluating competences or in assisting employees who have been made redundant. In large companies training and courses can be offered on the company premises, this is of course not possible in smaller firms. The support given to smaller companies therefore differs to that given to larger companies. In larger companies groups of employees can be trained or educated and plans can be made covering overall competence of the company. In smaller businesses and firms the support given is more based on the individual employee.

Guidance counsellors and vocational teachers at CFL feel that they support the companies in the region. The guidance counsellor's and the vocational teacher's roles are different but yet intertwined. Guidance counsellors help both employers and employees to see options. The vocational teacher adapts courses to fit employer and employee and can validate the knowledge of the employee, something the guidance counsellor also takes part in. The employer can make contact with either a guidance counsellor or a vocational teacher at CFL. Who he or she will contact often depends on former contacts.

"My opinion is that we are a support for the management in the companies in the region. They feel they can call us to ask about different types of courses". (Vocational Teacher, CFL)

"My role has been to sit down and talk about contents of upper secondary courses both for trainees and staff members who have participated in different programs. It is then the vocational teachers who validate students and plan the different courses". (Guidance Counsellor, CFL)

Contacts with employers can sometimes be hard to balance with the historically traditional role of guidance counsellors.

"It can be hard, at first, the mapping of competence in a company. We [guidance counsellors] are trained to think of the individual person first". (Guidance counsellor, CFL)

To be able to actively make contacts with employers, support from CFL as an organisation is needed for the guidance counsellors and the vocational teachers. The structures of the organisation CFL, or the way the learning centre works, need to support the outside work of the counsellors and teachers. Enough time to work in this manner is crucial. This is something counsellors and teachers at CFL constantly battle with. Both counsellors and teachers are fairly free to plan and manage their time. Management understands why counsellors and teachers are not always on the premises although this might not always be the case with all the colleagues.

Learning along the Way

In this last section we point towards a few problems that can occur when attempting to give guidance in the workplace. What can be learned from these problems? We also look at some of the ideas and reflections on networking. These reflections come from the partners themselves.

One of the partners stressed the importance of being able to show the employer that guidance in the workplace can solve problems for them. This means that attention must be given to the message that is given when contacts are made. That is why it is very important to co-operate with partners who have a good reputation. It is vital to find partners who have helped the employer to solve problems before. In the contacts with other organisations, which can open doors into workplaces, it is essential to be able to show the seriousness or dignity of other organisations involved. One problem for some of the partner countries was the lack of promotional material (flyers, brochures) in the beginning of the Guidance in the Workplace project. If flyers etc. had existed, it would have been easier to quickly share information with all those potentially interested. The material is now distributed. Other partners agree that giving correct and clear information about the Guidance in the Workplace is a key factor for success.

One way to get in to the workplace is to apply for ESF funding together. This makes the first attempts to establish a relationship less risky. However, this can not replace the fact that there need to be a problem to solve for the employer. One issue that employers may have is that employees might ask for higher salaries after receiving training or education. Another is that in most companies there is little or no time left for studies. The flexibility needed is difficult to achieve. One piece of advice given by an “old” partner was to try to find the “friendly” employers. Try to combine the work with other resources and aim to work with those employers who are genuinely interested. Another piece of advice from an “old” partner was to personally visit the employer, instead of sending for example an email. It is easier to meet employer’s questions or his/her hesitation to participate, face to face.

Something that some partners have learned along the way and which may result in a difficulty in establishing a lasting contact with the co-operating organisations (the door openers). The relationship is in some cases built on personal contacts with single administrators in the co-operating organisation. This is a good way to get in, but if the relationship is to be sustained, more than a personal contact with one or two individuals is needed. It is necessary to involve management and other staff in the project.

In one partner country there is a lack of interest for human relation work in general in many companies. The organisations that give guidance and counselling are for this and other reasons not used to working directly with employers. This makes it difficult to attempt guidance in the workplace. Here personal contacts with individuals in organisations giving guidance, who have a personal interest in promoting lifelong learning for those in employment, have been helpful. Even though many companies in this country have yet to discover the benefits of human relation work, some companies are beginning to see them. Personal contacts with individuals within organisations who are aimed at assisting companies in building HR-departments can therefore also be helpful in opening doors to employers.

One conclusion at the Söderhamn meeting was that working with the national employment agencies was important. However, at this point there was a shared general view among the partners that it is

² Svensson, L; Aronsson, G.; Randle, H. & Eklund, J. (2007). Hållbart arbetsliv – projekt som gästspel eller strategi i långsiktig utveckling: Malmö: Gleerups.

³ This and the other questions are based on research showing preconditions for sustainable change (development work) in projects aiming for change and development; see Svensson, L., Aronsson, G., Randle, H. & Eklund, J. (2007): Hållbart arbetsliv. Malmö: Gleerups.; also compare Docherty, P., Forslin, J & Shani, A.B. (eds). (2002): Emerging work systems: from intensive to sustainable. Creating sustainable work systems. London: Routledge.

difficult to work with national employment agencies. Individual administrators at the employment agencies who find guidance in the workplace interesting can be found, but most partners had experienced more difficulty in reaching further in to the agencies.

Concluding Remarks

Despite a few setbacks, mainly due to the re-organisation of some partner's organisations; the building of networks to get in to the workplaces was underway at the time of the Söderhamn meeting. Some of the contacts in the networks were of a more personal nature; some had the support from the management in the co-operating partner's organisation. Research² shows that sustainable development work is dependent on how well the work is anchored within an organisation. If the partners want a continued co-operation with the door opening organisations it is important to anchor the work within those organisations.

While it is difficult to tell if a project will be sustainable (i.e. have long term effects) or not when the project is still running, extensive research³ show that there are a few preconditions that will enhance a project's chances of being sustainable. One of them is that ownership of a project needs to be strong. Owners can be top management, politicians or others who allocate money and make future investments. Strong owners are owners that take an active interest in project results when the project is still running. They also need to be willing to implement good results or develop them further after the externally funded project has ended, or sustainability will most likely be poor. Therefore an anchoring process is often needed, if the project comes in "from the side" through an individual member of staff.

A strong ownership is also needed within the partner's own organisations. The next set of research questions will cover this; however we can see that partners differ in the way they look on the Guidance in the Workplace project. In some organisations it is very central and very much in line with the organisation's goals and daily work. With some partners the project is more peripheral, and maybe not seen as something that can be further developed by the organisation itself. In those cases it will be increasingly important to try to anchor the project into another organisation, so that results can be taken care of and developed further.

In the Guidance in the Workplace project there is an effort to learn along the way. Although the actual guidance activities have not yet started there has been learning about contact making and setting up for the practical work within the workplaces. We can already see that the different starting points in the countries as well as changes within partner organisations will most definitely have impact on the outcome. There are different challenges in each and every partner country. The structures surrounding the project work more or less with or against the project. Furthermore, a national authority is more likely to be able to influence structures working against the project so that they can be changed in the long run, while smaller, regional agencies have no or little chance of doing so. Therefore the impact of the Guidance in the Workplace will most certainly differ in the countries. Even so, the partners have an important task in disseminating results within their countries, so that others might be inspired to do the same, but also to bring the issues at hand to a regional and national level.

Attachment 1

Partners' Research questions (Meeting 2 Guidance at the Workplace)

These are the research questions we will be discussing in September in Söderhamn, Sweden. Please send in your report by the 22nd of August.

You will be asked to make a short presentation on your progress as well as problems locating and working with other organizations in your network(s). However, the aim is not only for everyone to present the status of every national project. Instead the research is something we will base our discussions and analysis on. The idea is that we jointly look at each and every country's position and try to identify crucial knots or problems for each country to solve, asking questions to understand the situation and giving each other advice where we can.

These are the questions. Some questions have already been answered by some partners. Please feel free to use the same text again if this is the case. Some question might be too early for some partners to answer. If that is the case, skip that particular question, but please make a comment that it is too early to give an answer. There are many questions, but the idea is that you give short answers. Explanations, if needed, can be made at the meeting. No reason to overdo, if more information is needed I will get back to you.

If you prefer you can use the grid I have prepared for you in a separate document or you can just write a text freely, like you did when preparing for our first meeting. If you have any questions, please use Romulus or send me an email. //Agneta

1. About your own organisation

- Please describe those directly working with the Merger 2 project within your own organisations. What functions do they have within the project and what function or position do they have within your own organisation?
- How do you inform others, within your own organisation about the project and progresses made?
- Would you describe Merger 2 as well known and/or central in your own organisation or as very peripheral and/or not considered very important (i.e. does it drown in everything else?)
- Overall; do you think there is enough support for those directly working with Merger 2 within your organisation or is there a lack of support?

The next five questions will be discussed at the meeting – no need to write answers now (unless you want to).

- *Does top management in your organisation know about the project?*
 - *Does top management in your organisation monitor the project's progress? If so, describe how.*
 - *How about other colleagues, do they know about, ask about or maybe get involved in the actual work in the Merger project?*
 - *Is there a need to inform or involve more colleagues into the project? How?*
 - *Is there a need to involve top management more or are they already "plugged in"?*
2. About Networks and organisations you are considering, or are already co-operating with
- Which networks or organisations have you (or your staff) contacted so far?
 - How was the contact made? (Did you use old contacts from your existing networks, or is the contact new – maybe someone you have worked with before "opened a door" for you?)
 - What are the results from the contacts (i.e. are there contracts, written plans, work in progress etc.)?

- Describe the person(s) that is your main contact in each co-operating organisation/network. Please describe how he or she can help you get in touch with workplaces and “get in”? (Or do they also need help from other networks/organisations to get in to the workplace?)
- Explain if you feel the contact within the organisation is at “the right level” to help sustain the work in the future or if you need to work further to find a contact at “the right level” to ensure (or try to ensure) sustainability?
- Describe the networks’ or co-operating organisations’ “daily work” in the companies you want to access. What do they offer to companies?
- Describe how guidance in the workplace fits in with their work?
- What type of companies can the organisation/network you have contacted provide access to?
- How would you grade the networks’ or organisations’ reputation amongst companies and their staff? Are they considered trustworthy or not, from the employers point of view – from the employees?
- Do you plan to contact more organisations?
- Are the networks you have listed (in grid 3) sufficient, or do you need to look for other networks or organisations that can be a link into places of work (this includes networks or organisations whose main purpose is not to provide advice and guidance)?

3. a) Problems and Solutions

- Describe any problems you have encountered when contacting, planning or working with other organisations/networks that could be of interest to other partners. Is there any crucial situation or moment that changed obstacles in the beginning into something that you have managed to work out?
- If your contacts have been fruitful. What are the contributing factors for success? (In you own organisation as well as in the organisation you co-operate with?)

4. b) Problems and Solutions

If you can, please write down a few sentences on what you have learned so far, in terms of finding, using and/or creating networks to find organisations (or departments in your own organisation) which can 1? Provide guidance counsellors in the workplace 2. Open a door, enabling counsellors to get into the workplace (This might be the same network/organisation or it might be two or more, working together). *There is no need for detail here; we will discuss this at the meeting.*

