



“Career Gardeners” Realisation of the new approach in Career Development

The project "Career Gardeners" is implemented by the Sudwind - Austria, Progettomondo - Italy, “Mother Coraje” - Spain, “Art Częstochowa” - Poland and Open Education Centre - Bulgaria under the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

The project “Career Gardeners” is based on a new understanding of the role and delivery of Career Development in the first decades of this century.

First, Career Development/Career Guidance is moving away from its focus on assisting individuals to make education, training, and occupational selection decisions at the beginning of a working life and toward a more flexible focus on the continuous construction of choices about working life over a lifetime.

Second, it is increasingly recognized that these work/life choices are made not only in the context of labour market factors but of human growth and development factors throughout a lifetime. Not only is the school-to-work transition of youth important, but also transitions that take into account family formation and support, ageing, and disability accommodation. In this perspective, individuals in every country make continuous choices about their working life, whether conscious or not.

Career Development - Principles

The word **career** comes from the Latin for cart or Chariot, a mean to carry you from one point to another. A career is about the and shaped by learners life one wants to lead – not just a job, occupation or profession. It involves decisions among possible, preferred futures. It answers “Who I want to be in the world”, “What kind of a lifestyle am I seeking” “How could I make an impact?”

Career Development is a LIFELONG PROCESS of blending and managing paid and unpaid activities, Learning(Education), Work (Employment, Entrepreneurship), Volunteerism and Leisure |Time

Career Development entails **DETERMINING INTERESTS, BELIEFS, VALUES, SKILLS and COMPETENCES** and connecting those with market needs.

Career Development should be **SELF-DIRECTED**. An individual is responsible for his or her career, but is not alone- we all influence and are influenced by our environment.

Career Development involves **UNDERSTANDING OPTIONS, NAVIGATING WITH PURPOSE** and making informed choices.

Career Development means **MAKING THE MOST OF TALENT AND POTENTIAL**.

However you define growth and success - not necessarily linear advancement.

Career Development is often **SUPPORTED AND SHAPED** by educators, family, peers, managers and the greater community.

Career Development can be **COMPLEX AND COMPLICATED** so context is key – there may be both internal constraints (financial, cultural, health) or external constraints (labor market, technology).

Career Development is **DYNAMIC, EVOLVING AND REQUIRES CONTINUOUS ADAPTATION** and resilience through multiple transitions,

“CAREER GARDENERS” PROJECT

These basic principles of career development underpin our 'Career Gardeners' project.

The project aims to sensitise young people to make informed, values-based, context-influenced choices about their career development through their participation in Career Development training delivered in Career Development Centres - "Career Gardeners".

The Project is a modest proposal for a Career Development programme, but rather outlines guidelines for a comprehensive career development policy / implemented in formal and non-formal education /

The team that developed the Project is convinced, that the decision of a nation to develop a policy and invest resources in career guidance should be guided by:

- the extent that individuals are able to make independent career decisions and the degree to which key stakeholders (particularly public policy-makers in governments) wish to promote independent career decision-making.

- this implies that the major institutions of society need to condone, if not encourage, individuals to freely choose work options.

- it implies that these work options are open to all members of society, regardless of sex, ethnicity, or other demographic or social factors.

As follows from the basic principles, the importance of context in which young people make their decisions and outline their ideas about career development, is crucial.

The need for an **ecological transition in the European societies** is overwhelming. The trade-offs between the social, economic, and environmental implications of this transition pose critical challenges that cannot be addressed without a strong political will and a systemic framework of supporting policies. The EU Green Deal has opened a window of opportunity in this regard that we cannot let pass; therefore, is now the time to create the capacity in our society to accelerate the process toward a more sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Young people are a major ally in this regard. It is noted that their attitude to sustainability and environment protection is significantly higher than the rest of the European population.

Therefore, exploiting this attitude can contribute to both entering the world of work and building a more sustainable, satisfactory and forward-looking career.

The other side of the Green Deal, and the overall transition to a green, sustainable society, is based on the creation of millions of 'green jobs'.

„Every job is green“

"Doing business sustainably" or "green" means acting in an ecologically and socially responsible manner along the entire value chain of a product or service - i.e. from the resources that are used, through production and transport, to packaging, consumption and recycling. The conscious use of energy and raw materials while avoiding or reducing the production of pollutants (such as particulate matter, exhaust gases and CO₂) and environmentally friendly innovations help to ensure that future generations around the world can also live safely and well.

This makes it clear: "Green action" in both the professional and private spheres contributes to a better future for all. Whether you are an electrician, a cook, a carpenter or a fashion designer - every job can be made green. For example, by consciously choosing the field of application,

such as renewable energies or environmental technology. Or through the conscious selection and use of materials, e.g. renewable raw materials, recycling or upcycling. Every company and every person can be more conscious of resources and develop sustainable products. The slogan "Every job is green" is therefore intended to make people aware that every job offers opportunities to work for a better future today. Therefore, it is particularly important to have well-trained professionals who are already working on sustainable solutions for tomorrow.

According to the Randstad-Employer brand research 2020, **work-life balance** is considered by Europeans the second most important criteria in choosing a job (47% of the interviewed), second only to remuneration and benefits (59%).

Healthy work-life balance refers to maintaining a harmonious relationship between work and personal life. It involves consciously managing your time and energy to meet both professional and personal commitments while prioritizing self-care and well-being.

Another key point in our project is that we put at the forefront of the right to make informed, values-based career choices. In previous career development programmes have emphasised the rather mechanical search for occupation based on the competences and skills of the individual.

Work values are the work-related qualities, principles and standards that really matter to you. Knowing what your values are can help young people plan a career, cultivate opportunities in their current work, or make a successful career change.

The focus on 'green values contributes to foster 'in youth work practice a societal and global challenges dimension'. Matching green values and career building enables young people 'to bring change on topics that they are already interested in, such as climate change', as well as to 'build links with other domains ... including ... employment and vocational training'.

The project pays specific attention to unemployed young people and the NEETs: the participating organisations will include some representatives of these vulnerable groups in their testing activities, to verify the level of inclusiveness of the new youth work activities. In so doing, as envisaged in this priority, the project supports the co-development and 'sharing of methods to reach marginalised young people'.

We have chosen to focus on supporting young people in making career choices coherent with their value system, and specifically the values they are particularly important to them: sustainability and 'green' values.

Career Gardeners Project aims to provide youth workers with the competences and the tools needed to support young people in making life choices coherent with their value system and in building work-life balanced and meaningful careers for themselves.

Expected results

One e-learning course for youth workers with theoretical and practical contents concerning career orientation and work-life balancing in relation to green values.

One web toolkit supporting youth workers in setting up Career Gardeners Clubs.
Several tens of youth workers of the participating organisations gain the capacity to implement

innovative youth work activity for career guidance, supporting young people in balancing jobs expectations and life values;

Elaborated Career Guidance Program and almost 100 young people involved in the project improve their understanding of the work-life balance issues in relation to their green values, and reinforce their capacity to build a satisfactory and forward-looking career.

Career Gardeners Clubs

The capacity building tools developed by the project intend to support youth workers in setting up Career Gardeners Clubs, safe spaces where young people can meet to reflect about their values, needs, and expectations towards career, as well as improve their knowledge of the EU Green Deal as a roadmap to sustainable economies. In addition, the clubs of Career Gardeners give young people the opportunity to dialogue with stakeholders of the green sectors and role models from the world of work.

Course Modules

The additional benefit of developing the course modules in a self-study mode, with the functionality to manage the learners and for them to generate their own certificate, is that after the project is completed, youth workers continue to learn, with minimal additional work from partners (except for server hosting maintenance and security updates).

Module- Knowledge

What is sustainability
Values and Green values
EU Green policy and GREEN Deal
Raising awareness in the environmental area

Module - How to include green values in your life?

What is a green job
Work-Life Balance. Work-Life Integration. Work-Life Harmony.
What is important to you? Values.Desires.Norms and epectations.
What do you want from working?

Module – Make waves in your working place

How to build change?

Conflict management – intergenerational, working place, conflict of interests
Conflict over conflicting values

Module – Competences

Importance of soft skills

The leadership competence in the Green Revolution

How to turn beliefs into actions and opportunities in your future job?

What competences can young people develop through activism?

How can a young person create a sustainable job or sustainable side-hustle?

Module – Mapping the opportunities

How to map your territory?

Create your check list of sustainability values in your job?