

European Doctoral Programme
in Career Guidance and Counselling



Progress Report

Public Part

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Executive Summary

The vision of the ECADOC project is to set up a sustainable European Doctoral Programme specialized on career guidance and counselling (CGC, our field) which offers highly promising graduates of European higher education institutions (HEI) the opportunity of becoming the spearhead of CGC-related research and higher education in Europe (and thus perhaps throughout the world). The project aims to attract diverse actors in the field, including higher education institutions, policy-makers, senior and junior researchers, and people involved in the academic training of CGC practitioners to invest into the development of career guidance and counselling as a specific area of multi-disciplinary research and training.

Concrete outcomes of the project will be a validated concept for summer schools and online courses and a research agenda for the area of career guidance and counselling. Furthermore, the project entails numerous activities to build the sustainability of doctoral training in the field of CGC, including public relations and activities such as the development of a business plan.

The ECADOC consortium involves higher education institutions from 15 European countries, which offer academic training in career guidance and counselling and bring together a multitude of disciplinary perspectives. The involved experts bring together state-of-the-art perspectives on qualitative, quantitative and collaborative research, academic writing, higher education and training, and the management of degree programs and projects, to offer an innovative training curriculum.

To foster collaborative learning on what kinds of structured doctoral training is relevant in the field of CGC, the project continuously consults with doctoral researchers in the field and involves them in the evaluation of its activities. Additionally, a common European Research Agenda is being developed, based on a mapping of the ongoing research in our field and the collaborative description of gaps and challenges for the future (also involving policy and practice).

Up until now, a first summer school has been conducted. Next to very positive results, the general curriculum and the program for the second summer school was improved based on the lessons learned. Furthermore, a consensus on competence standards for academic training at PhD level has been achieved in cooperation with the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE).

In the next phase, the concept of the summer schools will be refined, extended through the offer of webinars, and translated into a business model for the future. Once finished, the European Research Agenda will be published and translated into more concrete projects and proposals for international, collaborative research, involving PhD researchers. The scientific committee is also investigating options for the funding of a structured doctoral training program at the European level.

For more information, please visit: <http://larios.psy.unipd.it/ecadoc/pages/index.php>

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1. Project Objectives

The vision is to **set up a sustainable European Doctoral Programme specialized on career guidance and counselling (CGC, our field)** which offers highly promising graduates of European higher education institutions (HEI) the opportunity of becoming the spearhead of CGC-related research and higher education in Europe (and thus perhaps throughout the world).

Closely connected with this vision is the ambition to create the **structures and personal resources necessary for longitudinal, large scale, international research in our field**. For this purpose, part of the project is dedicated to the development of a common research agenda, which will describe the status quo of research on CGC and highlight particularly important areas, where innovative, collaborative research is needed (“European Research Agenda”).

Due to the multidisciplinary, practice-orientation and specificity of our field, we have a lot to gain from **joining forces in educating our most promising people**: On the one hand, the number of promising doctoral candidates, available research projects and mentors will be large enough at European level to carry out such a program continuously (scale). On the other hand, considering how comparatively small – and partially isolated – academic research and training efforts in our field are nationally, we can gain significant momentum in positioning our discipline through close collaboration in promoting the next generation of academic leaders in our field in Europe.

In order to achieve this vision, our project includes the development of a **curriculum for PhD level training in the area of CGC**, the organisation and evaluation of 3 **summer schools** for doctoral researchers from all over Europe, and the offer of **online courses** to a wide range of researchers in our field. Last but not least, the ambition of our project is to prepare the European Doctoral Programme for **sustainability**, i.e. setting up collaborative structures for collaboration in doctoral training, accrediting joint modules etc.

In summary, ECADOC aims at promoting the development of top-notch academics in our field all over Europe and establishing research and higher education in our field at the European level. This way, we want to achieve the following impact:

- Increase the competitiveness of doctoral education in the field of CGC,
- Overcome the lack of highly qualified academic leaders in our field, which prevents the development of specialized degree programs in some countries,
- De-fragment research on questions of career guidance and counselling, for the purpose of setting up large-scale, interdisciplinary research clusters,
- Support the development of a common language and body of knowledge around CGC, which transcends the barriers of disciplinary thinking and integrates psychological, educational, managerial and economic perspectives, as well as quantitative, qualitative and collaborative research approaches at the forefront of innovation in social sciences.

2. Project Approach

To achieve our objectives, we follow a developmental approach, comprising three phases of 'action learning' (as an 'organisation development' approach). The aim is to develop common concepts and cooperation structure and refine them continuously. Each of these phases focuses on reaching a higher degree of institutionalization of the foreseen European Doctoral Programme.

1. The first phase is mainly conceptual in its nature. Under the leadership of the Scientific Committee, **a degree profile, curriculum, a teaching and learning concept, and a first draft for the European Research Agenda (ERA) are developed**. The Advisory Board and the other experts of the consortium are involved in a process of reviews, to produce documents with wide support. On this basis, a first summer school is organized, involving doctoral researchers from all partner organisations. This summer school gives all participants a chance to **test the different concepts**, e.g. by testing teaching or group counselling methods, or by discussing the curriculum and the ERA. Phase 1 ends with an **introduction of the project to the wider public at a large international conference** in September 2014, where the ERA will be introduced and discussed with policy-makers, researchers and practitioners from all around Europe.

2. The second phase is dedicated to **refining the concepts and preparing structures for regular summer schools**, including organisational procedures for the selection of participants etc. It begins with the advertisement of the second summer school and a call for applications for the summer school, including the distribution of scholarships. **Selection and award criteria** and a selection committee are installed for a rigorous and fair process. For the third summer school, this process will be repeated and refined further. The second and third summer schools will be dedicated **intensive training sessions** for the development of conceptual and methodological research competences, as well as critical competences in terms of intercultural communication, collaboration, leadership, academic training, and innovation. Part of the training will be **project-oriented**, so that several **teams** will be set up, with the doctoral candidates continuing to cooperate on complex tasks after the summer schools. The goal is to **establish ongoing networks** (supported through mentors). In between the summer schools, the doctoral researchers will be able to participate in **online seminars** on special topics, which are open for a wider audience of interested scholars and practitioners.

3. The third phase is about ensuring the **sustainability of the programme**. It begins with the development of a **business plan** through the Scientific Committee, through activities to **accredit the programme at various universities**, and **search for funding options**. The publication of the ERA in a prestigious journal, yearbooks, and the continuous dissemination of project activities to more than 1.000 stakeholders around the World through several channels, are key to creating a strong image for ECADOC and raise interest in its continuity.

The developmental process will be supported through numerous **quality assurance structures**, which will be implemented from the beginning of the project, and which will be increasingly strengthened over its duration. **Responsiveness** to the needs of

different target groups is emphasized through **checks and balances**, **processes internal review**, **external evaluation** and the **active involvement of different stakeholders in the development of the central concepts**:

- The overall management of the project lies in the hands of the **Scientific Coordinator** Prof Dr Laura Nota from the University of Padova and the **Program Manager**, Johannes Katsarov. In the **Scientific Committee**, they work together with a team of five colleagues from other universities, in making all conceptual decisions, preparing different products and organising the summer schools. The Scientific Committee meets with an **Advisory Board** of senior researchers at several occasions to discuss strategic questions. Furthermore, the complete **Consortium** is consulted regularly on the development of the project via meetings at conferences or email.
- The **summer schools** are subject to the scrutiny of the doctoral researchers, who express their wishes and needs ahead of the event via a **survey**, and engage in an **open and critical discussion** at the end of the summer school. Additionally, the second and their summer schools will be evaluated through an experienced colleague, who will offer both a **public evaluation and confidential feedback** to the scientific committee.
- The development of the **European Research Agenda (ERA)** involves senior and junior researchers, as well as stakeholders through **involvement at conferences and summer schools**, where creative and critical discussions are organised. The final version of the ERA will be **evaluated publicly** through an internationally renowned expert for research and policy-development in the field of career guidance and counselling.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

One of the largest achievements of the ECADOC project up until now has been to contribute to the development of **European Competence Standards** for people trained in the field of career guidance and counselling at PhD level. The partners of the ECADOC consortium have supported this developmental process of the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (www.nice-network.eu) since 2013: The European Competence Standards will be published in May 2015 (see Chapter 7).

Building on this competence profile, the consortium has agreed on a **general curriculum** and put part of it into practice at a **first summer school** in Padua (Italy) in September 2014, which was attended by 28 doctoral researchers from 18 European countries, part of whom carried their own costs. The summer school included training in qualitative and quantitative research methods, offered by internationally recognized experts, and gave all researchers the opportunity to present and discuss their research. Furthermore, the summer school involved a number of experimental activities, including self-reflective methods, community, team and leadership development activities.

The doctoral researchers were also involved in **research around the design of the summer school** and in its **evaluation**. Before the summer school, the scientific committee collected information on the preferences of the PhD students and investigated their career development pathways in view of their plans. At the end of the summer school, both the scientific committee (which organised the summer school) and the participants applied the Delphi Method to evaluate the strengths of the event, as well as potentials for improvement. The scientific committee **revised the general curriculum** and **improved the concept of the second summer school** based on the lessons learnt. Further feedback came from a discussion of all project members at the European Summit for Developing the Career Workforce of the Future, which also included a discussion of the next steps.

With support from the European Commission and the EACEA, the original plan for the development of the **European Research Agenda (ERA)** was revisited and enhanced. In a first phase, a review of recent research in the field from all over Europe was undertaken, before a number of **100 stakeholders** from all over Europe were involved in discussing important issues for the development of research on CGC at the **Canterbury Summit**. At the first summer school, shortly after the summit, all participants had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the ERA as well. The goal was to actively involve the next generation of specialists in our field actively in shaping the research agenda of the future. Additional activities concentrated on imagining the construction of transnational, collaborative research projects based on the ERA.

From the beginning, ECADOC has been accompanied by strategic **efforts to create strong publicity** in the academic world. The development of the European Doctoral Programme was announced through a **press release**, which was published in the newsletter of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) and the **newsletters** of the European Society for Vocational Designing and

Career Counseling (ESVDC) and the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE). Further news followed in each of the newsletters and **special emails** sent to stakeholders around the World. Thousands of recipients have learned about the programme and voiced their interest in collaboration, including in North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia. At an **ICAP Symposium** in Paris (July 2014), a special ECADOC Symposium featured contributions from prominent researchers and project members on doctoral training and research in career guidance and counselling. **Videos** from the symposium and from the summer school are available for a wide audience via YouTube. Regular updates and information are offered through the project website.

The program for the second summer school was published in January 2015 with a formal **call for applications and selection criteria**. No second call for applications was necessary. The number and high quality of the applications required the **selection committee** to make several difficult decisions, admitting 28 people and awarding scholarships to talented researchers in need of economic support.

4. Partnerships

ECADOC is a joint initiative of the European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counselling (www.esvdc.org) and the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (www.nice-network.eu). Through these two networks, ECADOC is well connected with researchers, lecturers and degree programs focusing on career guidance and counselling (CGC) in all European countries and far beyond.

An interdisciplinary training programme at doctoral level for academic leaders only makes sense and will be sustainable, if enough suitable candidates can be attracted regularly and can be provided with proper supervision. In our highly specialized field of practice-oriented, multi-disciplinary research, cooperation at European level is imperative for our project for exactly this reason. Both the number of adequate supervisors and the number of potential candidates suggest for us to **join forces at a supranational level**. Bringing together 28 highly promising doctoral researchers for a summer school on CGC would hardly be possible at a national level.

For countries without degree programmes in career guidance and counselling, this programme provides a strongly needed solution in **developing the national capacities** to set up specialized degree programmes and training programmes for CGC practitioners in the future.

Working together under a common European roof additionally helps the programme to **foster internationalism and intercultural competence** among the participants; and to consequently overcome nationalistic stereotypes and feelings of cultural superiority which typically come from not being exposed to actual developments in other countries. For the participants of the first summer school, the experience of working together for a week in a group of people from more 18 countries, was overwhelmingly positive, as well as for the involved lecturers.

Finally, the **pooling of different good practices in doctoral training** in our field, together with the research expertise from specialists of different national and disciplinary backgrounds is highly beneficial for the quality of the doctoral programme. The resources and perspectives of the many involved experts are of immense value, particularly when it comes to designing a European Research Agenda (ERA) as a background for cooperation in doctoral training and transnational research projects. The **experience of discussing what kind of research is important at the European level** has been very inspiring, both in terms of many common interests, which emerge, and in terms of new ideas and perspectives, which we could exchange. The involvement of policy-makers, managers of career services and professional associations in the discussions around the ERA at the Canterbury Summit in September 2014 was particularly remarkable in this sense.

5. Plans for the Future

By this time, the **second summer school**, which will take place in Paris, is only a few months away, and has been organised to the largest extent. It involves a number of elements, which have found strong approval from the participants of the first summer school. In particular, it will offer methodological training in cross-cultural quantitative research and introduce a qualitative research approach, which involves practitioners and clients of counselling processes as co-researchers. Building on the wish of the first summer school's participants for more time to reflect and network, including with senior researchers, we have increased informal activities in the program. Furthermore, it will offer the doctoral researchers more time to exchange their research perspectives and to present and discuss their own research with others.

Another innovative aspect of the summer school will be the **collaboration with the UNESCO**, which is hosting an open discussion on future research into career guidance and counselling, where we will discuss challenges of international research collaboration and work to refine the **European Research Agenda (ERA)**. This document, which is being prepared for **open source publication in an international journal** in 2015, will be of particular importance for the sustainability of the programme, since it will delineate the relevance of transdisciplinary research collaboration on grand research questions in career guidance and counselling. In this way, it shall support the acquisition of funding for large-scale research projects in our field – which are still very rare – and provide a framework for future research.

Due to the importance of the ERA, we have succeeded at incorporating it in the agenda of the **Sixth NICE Conference in Bratislava** in May 2015, where approximately 120 researchers, lecturers, practitioners and policy-makers from all over Europe will be able to debate about research needs, based on a draft. Additionally, the NICE Conference will include an **ECADOC Symposium**, where experts in the field will reflect innovative perspectives on qualitative, quantitative and collaborative research into career guidance and counselling.

The conceptual **preparation of the third summer school**, which will take place in Switzerland, has also begun. A particular focus of the program will be given to academic training in career guidance and counselling.

In between the summer schools, we will also launch a **series of webinars**, asking different experts from the ECADOC Consortium to share perspectives on a number of topics. Topics will include lifelong guidance policy development, the management of degree programs, intercultural communication, quality assurance in guidance and leadership. Additionally, we aim at fostering the **development of international research teams** through the second summer school, who will continue to work together on topics related to their PhD research after the event, with the support of **ECADOC Mentors**.

Finally, the Scientific Committee is **investigating several opportunities for the sustainability of the programme** now, including European Joint Doctorates and funding partnerships for the continuation of summer schools. There is a strong

demand for doctoral training in CGC and we want to develop a sustainable offer. Additionally, we are investing in **global partnerships**. At the second summer school, two senior researchers, one from South America, one from Asia, will participate, in order to build international alliances. Our hope is to **support the development of similar doctoral programmes on other continents** and to investigate the option of doctoral training activities at the global level. Through **collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counselling**, we will probably also support a conference, taking place in Poland in 2016.

In terms of dissemination, we will again **video-record** the main presentations and sessions of the upcoming summer schools and conference symposia and **provide access to the materials** for other interested researchers. Through the preparation of **yearbooks** in 2015 and 2016, we also aim at making some of the materials accessible through publications that are accessible to a wider audience.

6. Contribution to EU policies

ECADOC aims at improving the **quality and relevance of higher education**, particularly to “recognize and incentivize the role of excellent teachers in student success”, to “attune curricula to current and emerging labour market demands”, and to “better exploit the potential of ICTs to enable more effective and personalised learning experiences”.

The program lets doctoral researchers, many of whom may become academic teachers and trainers in the future (or are so already), **experience competence-oriented training first-hand** – training, which draws on blended learning approaches, challenging group activities, active engagement, and promotes self-directed reflective learning actively. To **enhance reflection about high quality teaching and learning**, we consult the participants about their preferences before the summer school, welcome them in an atmosphere of openness and mutual support, and involve them in the evaluation of the summer schools.

We also consider this aspect particularly important to contribute to the EU Innovation policies. To **make the knowledge triangle work**, researchers need to understand themselves as people, who don't only create knowledge, but also **make state-of-the-art knowledge accessible for a wide range of stakeholders**, particularly through education and training. This aspect is endorsed strongly through the European Competence Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling of the NICE network, the development of which we have supported strongly through the ECADOC project, particularly for PhD level training in the area. Several webinars and a workshop at the third summer school will focus on **developing the competences of the participating researchers for academic training**.

In regards to the **attunement of curricula to current and emerging labor market needs**, ECADOC endorses research-based training in five domains of professional practice, which have been identified as crucial for career guidance and counselling by NICE (www.nice-network.eu). This model, which **emphasizes the development needs of lifelong guidance systems in Europe** as stressed by the European Commission and the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), is integrated strongly in the ECADOC program. For instance, the **need for citizens to develop their career management competences for self-organized lifelong learning** is emphasized in the NICE model through the domain of Career Education. This research and development priority again is endorsed in the European Research Agenda and identified as part of the career guidance and counselling field, from which the doctoral researchers are selected for the summer schools. Our ambition is to innovate research and training in the field of career guidance and counselling, putting a strong emphasis on the developmental needs as identified in policy and practice. Since the doctoral researchers must be viewed as people, who will partially be leading CGC training programs in the future, it is important to develop a wide, strategic perspective together with them. To support this process, we involve key speakers with different perspectives to share important views at the summer schools and through webinars.

7. Competence Profile for CGC Specialists

In cooperation with the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE), the ECADOC consortium has contributed to the development of European Competence Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling (ECS), which will be presented publicly at the Sixth NICE Conference in Bratislava on May 28, 2015.

The ECS don't only include a competence standard for practitioners of career guidance and counselling, but also for "CGC Specialists", preferably trained at Level 8 of the European Qualification Framework (PhD level). The competence profile of the CGC Specialists is highly innovative in two ways:

1. It opens pathways of graduates at PhD level for careers in academia, policy and practice and integrates research and training competences with competences for innovation and development in the field of CGC. Roles foreseen could be related to the management of career services, involvement in the development of lifelong guidance policy and institutions, roles in research, or in the supervision and training of career professionals.
2. It draws on the five NICE Professional Roles in promoting five routes for specialization in the area of CGC. For each of these routes, specific competence standards have been defined.

The generic professional competences, which have been agreed for all CGC Specialists are:

1. Provide academic training to reach learning outcomes according to international and national quality standards to assure the competence of all types of career professionals
2. Conduct and publish original research and develop fundamental theories on career-related topics to inform evidence-based practice, applying scientific standards rigorously
3. Design and validate scientifically based concepts (e.g. psychometric measures, quality standards, ethical guidelines) in cooperation with other professionals and stakeholders
4. Justify the value of interdisciplinary research and training in the field of CGC based on the findings of various academic disciplines and empirical knowledge on the particular challenges of career services

Additionally, the ECS state that people undertaking Specialist level training in the field of CGC should have achieved the competence standards defined for CGC Practitioners. This is an important premise for them to be recognized as career professionals on the one hand (and to identify themselves with the profession and discipline of career guidance and counselling), but also for them to reflect the complexity of the complete field of CGC in their particular field of expertise.