



National Evaluation Report

Lithuania

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Glossary

Except where otherwise stated, the definitions included here are derived from the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Glossary: <http://www.elgpn.eu/glossary>.

Terms in English

Adult basic skills

Definition

Basic skills may include competences in literacy (reading and writing), numeracy/everyday mathematics, Digital competence/ICT skills, and oral communication. Adult basic skills courses/programmes are literacy and numeracy education for adults who for some reason did not acquire these skills or a level sufficient for everyday adult life when they were at school.

Source: Project GOAL definition.

Basic skills assessment

An assessment tool that measures skills in reading and/or writing and/or Maths and/or digital skills.

Source: Project GOAL definition.

Career

The interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan, including how they balance paid and unpaid work, and their involvement in learning and education.

Career guidance

A range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to identify their capacities, competences and interests; to make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions; and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.

Counselling

The interaction between a professional and an individual helping them to resolve a specific problem or issue.

Early school leaver

See **Early leaver from education and training**.

Early leaver from education and training

A person aged 18 to 24 who has completed at most lower secondary education and is not involved in further education or training.

Source: Eurostat, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Category:Glossary>

Educational counselling/guidance

Helping an individual to reflect on personal educational issues and experiences and to make appropriate educational choices.

Employment counselling/guidance	Counselling or guidance that addresses one or more of the following domains: career/ occupational decision-making, skill enhancement, job search and employment maintenance. Activities include assessment, development and implementation of an action plan, follow-up and evaluation.
Guidance	Help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment.
Guidance counsellor	A trained individual delivering guidance as defined above. Guidance counsellors assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals.
Guidance services	The range of services offered by a particular guidance provider. These might be services designed for different client groups or the different ways that guidance might be delivered (e.g. face-to-face, online, telephone, etc.).
Interest inventory	An interest inventory is a career guidance tool that assesses an individual's interests in order to identify the employment or educational opportunities that are most appropriate for those interests. Source: GOAL Project Definition
Lifelong guidance	A range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.
Lifelong learning	All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.
Low-educated adult	An adult without upper secondary education
One step up	A priority of the 2007 Action Plan on Adult Learning is to "Increase the possibilities for adults to go one step up and achieve at least one level higher qualification". Source: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0558
Outcome (quality)	Positive or negative longer-term socio-economic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output

Self-knowledge

Knowledge that an individual has about him/herself. Developing self-knowledge/awareness is considered an important activity in career counselling: many career interventions are designed to increase self-knowledge.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning/ validation of prior learning (VPL)

A process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes against a relevant standard. It consists of four distinct phases: (1) identification – through dialogue – of particular experiences made by an individual; (2) documentation – to make visible the individual experiences; (3) a formal assessment of these experiences; and (4) recognition leading to a certification, e.g. a partial or full qualification.

Vocational rehabilitation

A process which enables persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive and emotional impairments or health disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or returning to employment or other useful occupation.

Source: <http://www.vra-uk.org/>

Abbreviations

ESF – European Social Fund

GOAL – Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners

IOE – University College London (UCL) Institute of Education

PES – Public Employment Service

VAEC – Vilnius Adult Education Centre

VET – vocational education and training

VJLMTC – Vilnius Jeruzalem Labour Market Training Centre

Executive Summary

This report presents the Lithuanian findings of the evaluation of the “Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners” (GOAL) project. The findings are based on the Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the GOAL project. An interim evaluation report of Wave 1 was published in November 2016.

Project GOAL aimed to develop or expand guidance and orientation interventions for low-educated adults in six countries: Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands, Lithuania, and Slovenia. Running from February 2015 to January 2018, GOAL was coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. The evaluation was carried out by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), London, working with local evaluation teams in each country.

GOAL Activities

The hypothesis underpinning GOAL was that an independent one-stop guidance service that puts the specific needs of low-educated adult learners at its centre may help to increase the participation of this target group in education and training. Each of the six partner countries piloted new guidance models to specific target groups within the low-educated adult population. Five intervention strategies were implemented:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations were established or improved.
2. **Tools** were developed to facilitate the delivery of guidance specifically to low-educated adults.
3. The **competences** which counsellors require to enable them to address the specific needs of low-educated adults were defined.
4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population were developed.
5. Each country sought to provide **high-quality guidance services** with the aim of optimising individuals’ learning and/or employment outcomes.

Research questions

Five research questions underpinned the GOAL evaluation:

1. What programme processes and resources were developed? To what degree did programmes achieve their implementation aims across the five intervention strategies, and what factors at programme and policy level appeared to influence this?
2. What service user outcomes were achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?

3. What was the Return on Expectations? That is, to what degree were programme expectations met?
4. What programme-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?
5. What policy-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?

Evaluation data

During two waves of the evaluation, data were gathered via:

- client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)
- client satisfaction and outcome data (user survey and qualitative interviews)
- client follow up survey
- programme and policy data (literature review; needs and strengths analysis)
- case studies of programme sites (qualitative interviews, document analysis, analysis of quantitative data)
- qualitative interviews with policy actors and partners.

Dataset

The Wave 1 dataset for Lithuania was collected from fieldwork undertaken between February and April 2016 and the Wave 2 dataset was collected between January and April 2017.

The quantitative dataset is comprised of:

- **Monitoring data for 100 service users.**
- **100 client satisfaction surveys.**
- **31 client follow up surveys.**
- **Four programme staff surveys.**

The qualitative data set is comprised of **interviews from eight clients and eight programme partners; follow-up surveys from 31 clients; focus group from four programme staff; interview / focus group from ten policymakers.**

Challenges

In principle, **no significant problems** were faced during quantitative and qualitative data collection. Both sites managed to reach the planned amount of service users and collect client satisfaction questionnaires from each of them. The sites did not find it difficult to integrate the tool for collecting data from clients into their sessions and were positive about using similar data collection processes in the future on a regular basis.

For Wave 1, a **one-session programme model** was used in Lithuania and this created challenges when evaluating the outcomes of the guidance sessions. In Wave 2 the number of sessions **was extended** to two and more. Another methodological challenge was related to the predominance of male clients in the sites (80%). It was also not possible to reach an equal representation of various target groups. It was also observed that, due to their low level of education and absence of experience with guidance services, clients found it challenging to summarise, analyse and reflect on their experience during interviews.

Findings

Programme participants and stakeholders

A typical GOAL service user in Lithuania was a **male** aged **under 35** years, who was a **job-seeker/unemployed or early school leaver**, educated to the primary or lower secondary education level. The majority of service users reported that they had not previously received guidance. GOAL service users may be defined as those who are easy to reach because they have shown up for a session after hearing or reading about it and are determined to learn new things and even gain a new qualification.

Guidance services were provided by **four female counsellors**, whose experience of providing adult guidance varies from five to 20 years. **Staff spent a very small proportion of their time on guidance for adults learners because this was not the main function of their job.** There was no special funding available for adult guidance and it was up to each institution's management to prioritise this area and dedicate resources to it.

GOAL guidance service

The main providers of guidance services for adults in Lithuania are adult education institutions. Adult education institutions' financial indicators rely on larger number of students, therefore **competition among education providers is huge.** In such a context it is **difficult to guarantee impartiality** in service provision because there is a high chance that clients will be referred mainly to learning opportunities within the education institution.

According to the counsellors, at least 2-3 sessions are needed to achieve tangible and sustainable outcomes for clients, but due to resource limitation this was not fulfilled for all clients. In Wave 1 a **model of one guidance session** was adopted. In Wave 2 it was agreed to arrange **at least two guidance sessions** so as to see the effect of having more than one session. Both sites offered mainly

face-to-face guidance and orientation services that covered both learning and job guidance. **Sessions typically lasted 31 minutes and longer.**

During first sessions counsellors gathered information about the client through an individual semi-structured interview, clarified personal objectives, performed simple tests to discuss personal strengths and weaknesses, identified needs and interests and level of skills, identified learning and job possibilities and agreed on next steps taken by client. During follow-up sessions clients informed counsellors about progress and obstacles encountered, completed additional tests, visited workshops and received other advice from counsellors. Validation of prior learning (VPL) was a part of the sessions but only a small share of service users recognised it as such. This indicates that **VPL should be better integrated into the guidance sessions** and that in general it needs better awareness raising among the population.

Partnerships and Networks

The current adult guidance system in Lithuania is rather **fragmented**, with different institutional networks belonging to different Ministries or municipal administration and with underdeveloped mutual links for exchange of information.

In Lithuania, the intervention sites had partnerships with various educational, local policy, employment partners and NGOs before the GOAL programme that have existed for some time. Some cooperation (e.g. with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange) is quite intensive and regular, other partnerships (e.g. NGOs) can be characterised as fragmented and dependent on project-based funding. With some partners existing arrangements were strengthened and a new partnership was developed between two sites.

Over the life of GOAL, existing **partnerships have strengthened** and new partnerships were established. Still the establishment of **new sustainable partnerships** that would go beyond passive information dissemination was challenging. The least successful were the trials to establish partnership with municipal welfare services since they were already in close contact with the guidance services of public employment service (PES).

Clear goals of partnership, clear objectives and roles of partners, shared interests of all parties, willingness to cooperate and availability of funding were regarded as the main factors influencing the quality of collaboration/ partnerships. The availability of funding and lack of joint interests were indicated as barriers to the sustainability of partnerships. The failure to demonstrate the benefits and potential of partnership is a serious challenge to future programme development, as guidance is only one of **several competing interests** that potential partners share.

Counsellor competences

There is no national competence standard for adult guidance counsellors and no specific country-wide support measures for counsellors are available on a regular basis.

From the point of view of programme staff, **counselling and psychological counselling skills**, and **knowledge of counselling methods and tools**, were the most important competences for their work.

Self-reflection and learning to learn were identified as competences that need to be strengthened. Programme staff also stressed the importance of knowledge of labour market situation, labour market forecasts, and profound understanding of training offer.

Professional development very much depends on personal initiative. Nevertheless, service users identified counsellors' professionalism and experience as strengths of the service. No obvious areas for improvements in terms of work or competences of counsellors were detected.

A general consensus was that **it would be beneficial to have a common counsellor competence standard that would be agreed at the national level**. This was seen as a step towards setting common standards for quality and competences of guidance specialists.

Guidance tools

In Lithuania, the majority of guidance tools available to guidance staff are developed for school children and therefore **need adaptation** for work with adults. Both institutions were used to working mostly with low-qualified or low-educated adults and have developed tools that suit this target group. To assist programme staff, before the GOAL programme began, additional guidance tools were offered, namely, a form of semi-structured interview, tools for mapping competences and interests, a structure for a career plan, and information about CV and motivation letter writing. No major problems occurred in piloting and use of tools.

Interviews and follow-up survey revealed that for clients it was challenging to specify tools/activities used in the counselling that they found particularly useful. The majority of clients contacted for the follow-up survey (18 of 31) indicated paper-based tools as particularly useful.

Outreach

The monitoring data revealed that a third were referred by unemployment services (31%), and another third (34%) by educational institutions and educational support services. 26% clients self-referred to the service and a very small share of clients (2%) was referred by social welfare services.

Outreach activities within GOAL were based on existing partnerships, mainly with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange local office, employers, the Vilnius municipality and several NGOs. Information campaigns were organised and information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions and in the sites.

The majority of GOAL service users in Lithuania can be characterised as motivated, because they took the initiative and showed up for the guidance session. The main challenge in terms of outreach in Lithuania was **reaching those individuals who are lacking in motivation**. 'Outreach' services have to find these people and provide them with a range of services: information on learning and jobs available, counselling, including psychological counselling when needed, etc. It is also a challenge to prepare institutions providing guidance services to work with unmotivated, low-educated adults who come from a deprived background, and to establish sustainable partnerships with NGOs and municipal welfare services who are the most active in serving this target group.

Service outcomes

The main reason for the end of guidance sessions was that in the Lithuanian programme model **clients have finished the planned number of sessions** (either one in Wave 1 or 2+ in Wave 2). A small percentage of clients (5%) discontinued guidance because of distance and employment. 14% of clients cited other reasons, such as participation in compulsory military service, going abroad for work, and personal reasons.

According to clients the result of the session was that **information was provided** about what to study and where; development of a **personal action plan; interest inventory; assessment of key competences and consulting about financial assistance for learning**.

In general, service users assessed **the outcomes of the guidance sessions positively** and did not report any shortcomings or proposals for improvement. After the counselling session they felt that the next steps were clearer and the counselling helped them to plan what to do next, they felt more motivated and more aware of education and training options and were determined to follow up on the advice given by the counsellor. They also confirmed that their expectations to get advice were met and they felt their self-esteem had increased and that they were more motivated to make positive changes in their life. During interviews and follow-up survey in addition to the obvious 'hard' outcomes of sessions (getting necessary information and referring to training) service users reported additional unexpected ('soft') benefits: e.g. after the sessions their self-esteem had increased and they became more motivated for positive changes in their life.

Lithuania's mediocre performance on PIAAC highlights **the need to improve individuals' basic skills**, and also highlights the potential drawbacks of relying on online guidance services. These challenges may bolster the case for continued funding of GOAL or similar interventions after EU funding expires.

Service quality

The vast majority of clients were satisfied with their contact with the counsellor. They did not suggest any improvements that could be made to the service and all said they would recommend the service to others.

These findings point to the importance of and **the need for developing a strong personal contact** between counsellor and client, the better suitability of face-to-face contact versus group counselling (or at least to have a combination of both types of counselling), and a need to concentrate guidance services in one location.

Policy actors also underlined that low-educated adults are a vulnerable group that benefit from special access and methods. They felt that it is important to have contact with clients for more than one session and to engage clients into several consecutive sessions, although many clients believe that one session is enough. Staff proposed to tailor guidance tools and methods for the needs of low-educated persons, to work towards reducing the fragmentation of guidance services and to develop the system for training adult guidance specialists.

The GOAL experience showed that GOAL sites **without additional funding and a clear mandate would struggle to provide high-quality guidance services**. Since there is no special funding available for adult guidance, it is up to each institution's management to prioritise this area and dedicate resources to it.

Conclusions

GOAL intervention strategies were achieved to a greater extent. The implementation of GOAL resulted in:

- provision of guidance services to 100 low-qualified/ low-skilled clients;
- analysis of quality and clients' satisfaction of guidance services;
- provision of recommendations for improving the quality of services and keeping the service sustainable;
- exploring the effectiveness and sustainability of partnerships of GOAL sites, maintaining existing or established new partnerships;
- piloting of small scale outreach activities;
- design of guidance tools to work with target group;
- policy dialogue among key policy actors in adults' guidance or their representatives.

High service quality and positive service user outcomes are primarily the product of staff competence and experience. **The sites chosen already had structures, staff and tools in place prior to GOAL.** Moreover, they had an institutional interest to engage in GOAL, because they believed in the potential of guidance services and welcomed proposals regarding improvements.

Nevertheless, we must report **reservations about the sustainability of GOAL services**. The experience showed that it is beneficial to keep and support such services in education institutions. On the other hand, in the absence of additional funding and a clear mandate, GOAL sites would not be capable of providing high-quality guidance services targeted exclusively to low-educated/ low-skilled adults.

Recommendations

Actions are needed to tackle the fragmentation of the adult guidance and orientation system and to increase access to guidance for every adult in need of such services. Interventions that are being implemented by different actors should be better coordinated. It would be beneficial to have **an agreement for a long-term vision in adult education, including an agreement on the position and role of guidance services**. The establishment of a central focal institution for adult education, with responsibility for supporting and monitoring of local level **adult guidance and orientation services, would also contribute to expanding GOAL-type services**. A simple **data collection system** could be worked out nationally to collect data for the purpose of service quality evaluation and improvement. The GOAL experience also showed that **the NGO sector** might be more actively involved in outreach. Finally, it is very important to seek **alternatives for project-based funding** of adults' guidance services.

1 Introduction

The ‘Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners’ Project (GOAL) was a collaboration between six partner countries: Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia¹. Project GOAL sought to develop existing models of guidance and orientation for adults in the six countries in order that these services specifically reach low-educated adults and address their needs. GOAL was a three year project, running from February 2015 to January 2018, and was coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. Project GOAL was evaluated by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), London, in partnership with local evaluation teams in each of the GOAL countries.

This report presents national evaluation findings for Lithuania. These findings cover the full evaluation period, which consisted of two waves: Wave 1 and Wave 2. A Wave 1-only (i.e. interim) report is also available on the GOAL project website:

<http://www.projectgoal.eu/index.php/publications>. This evaluation draws on quantitative data on GOAL service users collected between the launch of the programme in February 2015 and the 7th of April 2017; qualitative data collected from programme stakeholders and service users in April and May 2016 and March and April 2017, and contextual data gathered during a local needs and strengths analysis.

1.1 The GOAL project

Funded under ERASMUS+, Project GOAL addressed the European Commission’s priority theme of reducing the number of low-educated adults through increasing participation rates in adult education. As well as contributing to the European Agenda for Lifelong Learning (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult_en.htm), GOAL contributed to three priority areas of the 2008 ‘Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies’ (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf), that is, to facilitate access by all citizens to guidance services, to develop the quality assurance or guidance processes, and to encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders.

Project GOAL was targeted at low-educated adults, that is, at adults without upper secondary education (ISCED level 32). The context for GOAL is that adult education provision in the six countries is fragmented and there is currently a lack of coordination between the different providers and stakeholders that are involved with low-educated adults. Moreover, although the partner countries have some forms of guidance for adult learners, or have specific policy strategies that focus on

¹ Two members of the Turkish Directorate of Lifelong Learning are participating in GOAL as observers, with the aim of learning from the project and identifying opportunities to promote lessons in Turkish guidance policies.

² For more on UNESCO’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

educational guidance and orientation, the existing services, or the structures on which these services rely, do not reach the adults most in need of education as well as they could or in sufficient numbers.

The hypothesis underpinning GOAL was that an independent one-stop guidance service that puts the specific needs of low-educated adult learners at its centre could help to increase the participation of this target group in adult education. To this end, each of the six countries piloted new guidance models, in two locations within each country, to specific target groups within the low-educated adult population. Five intervention strategies were implemented by the GOAL partners, although not all strategies were implemented in all countries:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations were established or improved.
2. **Tools** were developed to facilitate the delivery of guidance specifically to low-educated adults.
3. The **competences** which counsellors require to enable them to address the specific needs of low-educated adults were defined.
4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population were developed.
5. Each country sought to provide **high-quality guidance services** with the aim of optimising individuals' learning and/or employment outcomes.

The aim of the GOAL project was that, through developing, piloting and evaluating these interventions:

1. The processes to **implement** effective guidance services and supporting networks that improve service user outcomes would be mapped.
2. The **criteria, success factors and conditions** on implementation (processes) that contribute to outcomes of guidance users would be identified.
3. Potential generalizable **case studies** would be made available to be analysed by policymakers to understand and analyse challenges and success factors in establishing 'joined-up' programmes in complex policy fields.
4. The **policy processes** that play a role in influencing programmes success would be identified and described.

1.2 The GOAL evaluation

This evaluation has two aims. Its primary aim is to understand, assess and improve GOAL across the six participating countries. The evaluation also aims to provide country-specific case studies that can be analysed by policymakers seeking to understand challenges and success factors in establishing 'joined-up' programmes in complex policy fields.

The evaluation focuses on processes and outcomes, thereby enabling the identification of success factors across different programme contexts. This evidence can potentially be used to develop a structural support basis amongst decision makers and relevant stakeholders for scaling up the pilot learning guidance and orientation models in partner or other countries.

Five research questions underpinned the GOAL evaluation:

1. What programme processes and resources were developed? To what degree did programmes achieve their implementation aims across the five intervention strategies, and what factors at programme and policy level appeared to influence this?
2. What service user outcomes were achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?
3. What was the Return on Expectations? That is, to what degree were programme expectations met?
4. What programme-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?
5. What policy-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?

The evaluation unfolded in a series of stages:

1. **Pre-implementation stage** (February 2015 - October 2015): activities centred on needs and strengths analyses in each of the six countries; on reporting the results of these analyses, and generating data collection tools.
2. **Ongoing (cross-wave) data collection** (November 2015³ - 7 April 2017)
 - a. Client satisfaction survey
 - b. Monitoring data
3. **Wave 1 data collection** (with national reporting completed in October 2016)
4. **Wave 2 data collection** (with national reporting completed in October 2017), a longitudinal follow-up survey in each country
5. **Data analysis and final reporting**

Section 2.2 of this report outlines the evaluation methodology in greater details.

The evaluation was performed by researchers of Qualifications and VET Development Centre. In the GOAL project, Qualifications and VET Development Centre is responsible for the qualitative data collection, the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, and reporting.

1.3 Project GOAL in Lithuania

Context

Adult educational guidance services in Lithuania are very fragmented and can be provided by education centres, by employment services, and by VET institutions which have a focus on career and educational guidance. Adult education guidance is acknowledged as a priority area for improvement in education policy documents; however, the system lacks clarity and coordination when it comes to governance and institutional framework issues. **No specific adult guidance institutions have been established** and currently adult education providers (vocationally oriented and general education) are the main providers of guidance and orientation services. The only exception to this system concerns the registered unemployed, who may apply to Public Employment Services and receive guidance and counselling regarding their career and learning.

Existing services do not meet the expectations and needs of low skilled adults: services are not equally distributed throughout Lithuania; adults are not always aware of the availability of such services in their neighbourhood; services are not always targeted to low skilled adults, and guidance staff may lack knowledge of and tools for this target group. Usually **guidance and counselling play only a minor role in the field of activities of educational institutions**. This activity lacks attention, funding, and often is based on the motivation and enthusiasm of the individual consultants and the management. On the personal level, **adults in Lithuania are not familiar with guidance and counselling and may be sceptical about its benefits**.

Institutions providing counselling are often not proactive at finding new partners or establishing broader networks with other organisations, and no real partnerships are currently established.

GOAL programme

Aims

The main aims of the GOAL activities in Lithuania were: to **improve the participation rates** of low skilled and low educated persons in adult education; to **identify ways of reaching low qualified or low educated people and motivate them** to get involved into guidance process; to **find the most suitable ways and tools** to provide counselling to this group; and to **establish and/or strengthen the partnerships between the different stakeholders and service providers** in this area.

Activities

Lithuania focused on three of the five GOAL intervention strategies:

- Establishment of relevant **networks** (1): networks consisting of VET schools, adult education centres, employment services, social units of municipalities, and NGOs will be set up to reach the specific target groups and to harmonise the provision of guidance.

- Development of **tools** (2): based on analysis of experience, guidance service tools are being prepared for trial in a VET institution and an adult education centre.
- **Quality** of guidance services (5): guidance services will be tested in order to improve the quality and scope of service provision, to evaluate effectiveness and ensure better follow up of those using the service.

Sites

These interventions were piloted in two sites. The **Vilnius Adult Education Centre (VAEC)** provides basic and secondary education for adults, and organises non-formal education courses. Guidance and orientation is one of its functions, provided mainly to its adult students. This institution works mostly with early school leavers. The **Public Institution Vilnius Jeruzalem Labour Market Training Centre (VJLMTC)** is an educational organisation specialising in vocational training for adults in the construction, transport and engineering sectors. The main goal of the centre is to provide high-quality vocational training services for adults so that they can join the labour market as skilled and competent employees. One of the additional services offered is guidance and orientation of adults. This institution deals mostly with low-qualified/low-skilled adults.

Target groups

The two target groups chosen for the GOAL project in Lithuania were early school leavers and low-skilled/low-qualified adults: each site chosen for GOAL was oriented to work with one of these two groups. The two target groups differed in regards to their age and educational background. The largest share of clients of the VAEC were young adults (aged under 25 years) who dropped out of the education system at the lower or upper secondary education level. VJLMTC clients were more diverse in terms of age. The main difference between two sites is the type of education on offer: VJLMTC is vocationally-oriented and provides formal and non-formal training courses and VAEC offers general education programmes leading to maturity certification. In everyday practice, there might be an overlap between these client groups because it is common for young early school leavers with no prior general education or vocational qualification go to VJLMTC for guidance and for gaining their first qualification. However, the majority of GOAL service users in VJLMTC have achieved upper-secondary education level and those in the VAEC have not. Most VAEC clients were registered with the Public Employment Service and thus were classified as unemployed people.

1.4 About this report

This is the final GOAL evaluation report for Lithuania. An interim report, published in 2016, can be found on the GOAL project website: <http://www.projectgoal.eu/>. This website also includes final and interim reports for the five other countries participating in GOAL. In addition, the project website includes the final and interim GOAL cross-country report, which synthesise data and findings from all six GOAL countries. Key aims of the cross-country reports are to enable participating countries to learn from one another's programme development experiences, and to draw lessons that can support national-level programme improvement.

The current national report is comprised of 11 chapters including this Introduction. This report is structured as follows.

- Chapter 2 describes the methodological design of the evaluation.
- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the GOAL programme participants and stakeholders in Lithuania.

Chapters 4-10 report on programme processes and findings, covering the following topics:

- Chapter 4 describes the GOAL service in Lithuania.
- Chapter 5 discusses GOAL partnerships and networks.
- Chapter 6 discusses GOAL counsellor competences.
- Chapter 7 focuses on guidance tools used in the provision of GOAL services.
- Chapter 8 looks at GOAL outreach strategies.
- Chapter 9 presents and analyses programme outcomes.
- Chapter 10 discusses the quality of the GOAL programme.
- Chapter 11, the Conclusion, addresses the five overarching evaluation questions, as well as the potential implications of this project for future programmes and policy.

The reporting template on which this national report is based was designed by IOE to be used across all six countries. IOE also contributed generic text to the six national reports, including the material on the GOAL project background and the evaluation methodology. All reporting on national and site level findings is authored by the local evaluation team, with editorial input from IOE.

2 Methodology

This chapter summarises the evaluation methodology for the GOAL project, discussing: the overarching evaluation design; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis; and methodological challenges within Lithuania and across the six-country project as a whole.

2.1 Evaluation design and methods

Evaluation design

The methodological approach for this evaluation was shaped by the complexities of the project design, namely the facts that:

- GOAL was multi-site (12 ‘sites’ or locations, that is, two in each of six countries) and multi-organisational.
- GOAL had multiple objectives.
- GOAL was predicated on cross-organisational collaboration.
- Each partner country had its own unique context and target groups (and target numbers to achieve).
- Programme resources were finite, and should be primarily focused on the interventions rather than the evaluation.

For these reasons, it was neither feasible nor advisable to conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation involving comparison groups. Instead the evaluation has positioned itself within the broad ‘**Theory of Change**’⁴ approach. Evaluations adopting this approach^{5,6} typically seek to address two levels of theory: 1) Implementation theory and 2) Programme theory.

Implementation theory focuses on how programmes are implemented, e.g. the intervention strategies that underpin programme activities. **Programme theory** focuses on programme mechanisms, by which we refer not to programme *activities* but to the *changes* within participants that those activities facilitate. These changes, in turn, may lead to the desired programme outcomes. For example, in a counselling programme such as GOAL, counselling is not a mechanism, it is a **programme activity**. Programme activities will ideally **trigger mechanisms (i.e. responses) within programme participants** – such mechanisms may include greater knowledge, increased confidence

⁴ Weitzman, B. C., Silver, D., & Dillman, K. N. (2002). Integrating a comparison group design into a theory of change evaluation: The case of the Urban Health Initiative. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 23(4), 371-385.

⁵ Rogers, P. J., & Weiss, C. H. (2007). Theory-based evaluation: Reflections ten years on: Theory-based evaluation: Past, present, and future. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2007(114), 63–81.

⁶ Weiss, C. (1997). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21, 501–524.

or motivation, and/or heightened ambition. These mechanisms, in turn, may then contribute to client actions and outcomes, such as enrolling on a course.

While drawing on Theory of Change approaches in general, the GOAL evaluation also draws on a specific type of Theory of Change evaluation: **Realist Evaluation**⁷. The Realist approach emphasises the central importance of the **interplay between programme contexts and mechanisms**. A central tenet of Realist Evaluation is that programmes do not themselves produce outcomes in a direct causal fashion: programmes are not catapults with which we metaphorically launch clients into a better future. Unlike balls launched by catapults, clients have **agency**. Furthermore, they live their lives within **structural contexts**; these contexts produce **constraints and opportunities** within which agency may flourish (or not) to greater or less degrees. Causality (in terms of the intervention producing the desired effects) is thus contingent rather than deterministic: in the appropriate context and for the people, programmes (through their activities) *may* facilitate the triggering of mechanisms which *may* in turn lead to desired outcomes. Realist Evaluation, as with Theory of Change evaluation more generally, seeks to develop and test hypotheses about which interventions (or aspects of those interventions) work for whom in what contexts. As a corollary of this objective, Realist Evaluation rejects the assertion that to be considered successful, programmes must be context-independent, in terms of their ability to produce desired outcomes through the same intervention strategies for all target groups across all contexts. Whereas such context-independence and broad-scale generalisability may potentially be achieved with simpler interventions, it is unlikely to be feasible with complex interventions such as GOAL. A key objective of Realist Evaluation (and Theory of Change evaluation more generally) is thus to produce **theoretical generalisations which future programme developers and policymakers can draw on** when developing interventions in their own particular contexts and for particular target groups. This means measuring not only the degree to which a programme does or does not work, i.e. the degree to which it produces the desired outcomes, but also generating knowledge about **how programmes work, for whom, in what contexts, and why**. This requires in-depth understanding of intervention strategies and activities, and their relationship to programme contexts, mechanisms and outcomes.

In generating knowledge not just about whether programmes work but also how and why they do so, evaluators seek to go beyond merely providing a summative assessment of a specific programme. Summative evaluation is necessary but not sufficient. A broader goal is to contribute to the **cumulation of knowledge** in a field. Such cumulation, and the theory development it implies, is particularly essential in underdeveloped fields such as that investigated by GOAL: guidance and counselling for low educated adults. This objective is important not just because of the **limited amount of credible evidence in this nascent field**, but also because of the **inherently complex nature of interventions such as GOAL**. Evaluations which seek to understand and assess complex interventions must take account of a range of complicating factors within the programme⁸, including: 1) multi-agency governance and/or implementation; 2) simultaneous causal strands leading to

⁷ Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. SAGE.

⁸ Rogers, P. J. (2008). Using Programme Theory to Evaluate Complicated and Complex Aspects of Interventions. *Evaluation*, 14(1), 29–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389007084674>

desired outcomes; 3) alternative causal strands leading to desired outcomes; and 4) recursive causality. These four factors are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The importance of **multiple agencies** will be apparent throughout this report, particularly in discussions of partnerships and networks. As these agencies exist at programme and policy levels, the evaluation takes a multilevel approach: an important element of the evaluation is the description and assessment of the policy factors that play a role in influencing programme success. It is hoped that this dual focus on **programme-level and policy-level processes**, and their interaction, will provide useful evidence for a range of policymakers working in complex fields.

The notion of **simultaneous causal strands** refers to the presence of two or more causal strands that are required in order for desired outcomes to be achieved – e.g. for programme participants to enrol on a course, they may need to improve their motivation (causal strand 1), but viable courses also need to be made available to them (causal strand 2). '**Alternative causal strands**' refers to the likelihood that one aspect of the programme may work for one client (in terms of producing a desired outcome), whereas another aspect may work for another client. For example, one GOAL client may take the 'next step up' into education as a result of increasing their previously low self-confidence or self-belief. Another client may take the same step for a different reason, e.g. perhaps she was already motivated but simply lacked information about relevant courses.

Finally, the notion of **recursive causality** refers to the non-linearity of many causal pathways. A linear model of programme theory might, for example, show a client moving in a direct, linear fashion across the following stages:

1. Improved self-esteem, *which leads to*
2. Increased ambition, *which leads to*
3. Desire for knowledge about further education courses, *which leads to*
4. Enrolment on a course, *which leads to*
5. Successful completion of the course.

A more realistic (particularly for disadvantaged target groups), recursive model of causality might include all five of these stages, but would take account of the tried and tested maxim that humans often need to take one step back in order to take two steps forward. Thus, a recursive model of causality might be:

1. Improved self-esteem, *which leads to*
2. Increased ambition, *which leads to*
3. A crisis of confidence: the client had never seen herself as an ambitious person, and is uncomfortable or even threatened by this new identity. This *could lead to*
4. Additional focus on self-esteem and identity, *which leads to*
5. Desire for knowledge about further education courses, *which leads to*
6. Enrolment on a course, *which leads to*
7. Another crisis of confidence, *which leads to*
8. Renewed focus on self-esteem and identity, plus a focus on study skills and resilience, *which lead to*

9. A new, expanded identity or self-concept as a capable learner, *which leads to*
10. Successful completion of the course.

A central objective of the GOAL evaluation is to develop and present a rich understanding of the range and types of causal pathways to be found in the programme, and the relationship of these pathways to specific national and local contexts.

In summary, this evaluation has sought to achieve three **overarching objectives**⁹: 1) to measure the effects of GOAL, with regard to client outcomes; 2) to understand how, why, for whom and in what contexts outcomes are (or are not) achieved; and 3) to contribute to joint learning and knowledge cumulation – both (a) within the GOAL programme itself (e.g. by sharing process evaluation evidence with programme developers and other key stakeholders), and (b) in terms of the broader field of adult guidance and counselling (by providing credible and relevant programme theory and evidence that future programme developers and policymakers can draw upon in their own endeavours). In working towards these objectives, evaluation evidence has been gathered via:

- client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)
- client satisfaction and outcome data (user survey and qualitative interviews)
- programme and policy data (literature review; needs and strengths analysis)
- case studies of programme sites (qualitative interviews, document analysis, analysis of quantitative data)
- qualitative interviews with policy actors.

The report includes quotes from clients, staff, policy makers and programme partners that were translated from Lithuanian into English by the report authors.

The evaluation includes: a) ongoing data collection (throughout the life of the project) and b) wave-specific data collection.

Interim reporting

An interim national evaluation report for each GOAL country was published in November 2016. These reports, along with an interim cross-country report synthesising findings and key messages from all six countries, are available at <http://www.projectgoal.eu/index.php/publications> under the heading 'Wave 1 Evaluation Reports'. A key aim of interim reporting stage, which drew on data collected through February 2016-April 2016, was to analyse and share early messages in order to facilitate service adaptation and improvement.

9 Berriet-Sollic, M., Labarthe, P., & Laurent, C. (2014). Goals of evaluation and types of evidence. *Evaluation*, 20(2), 195–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389014529836>.

The findings from the interim reporting stage are included in the current (i.e. final) report.

2.2 Sample

In Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the GOAL evaluation, monitoring data were collected from **100 GOAL service users** in Lithuania (50 service users in each wave). Each service user also filled in a client satisfaction survey questionnaire (see Table 2.1.). In addition, 8 clients were contacted for qualitative data collection in Wave 1 (2 face-to-face interviews and 6 phone interviews) and 31 clients were contacted by phone in Wave 2 for the follow-up survey.

Focus groups were organised with staff members (four in each wave) and one-to-one interviews were organised with programme partners (four in each wave). What regards policy actors, in Wave 1 one-to-one interviews were organised with six policy actors and in Wave 2 a focus group was organised with four policy actors.

Table 2.1. *Data collection sample, Lithuania*

Method	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total
Questionnaire monitoring data	50	50	100
Questionnaire client satisfaction survey	50	50	100
Questionnaire follow-up survey service users	0	31	31
Interview service users	8	0	8
Interview/ focus group policy actors	6	4	10
Focus group programme staff	4	4	8
Interview programme partners	4	4	8
Total	122	144	265

2.3 Data collection

Quantitative data

Quantitative client data were collected throughout the life of the programme via: 1) a data monitoring instrument and 2) client satisfaction surveys. The **data monitoring instrument** gathered detailed information about the clients on the GOAL programmes, thus enabling evaluators to measure target numbers and track a range of programme processes and service user outcomes. This instrument included a question asking clients if they could be contacted later as part of the evaluation study.

During **first guidance session** the data monitoring instrument was used for collecting **clients' entrance data** (50 clients in each wave). **In Wave 2 data monitoring instrument was used to collect exit data of fifty clients.** Some clients returned after their second session, but monitoring data from these sessions was not collected. Each client was assigned a unique identifier by the counsellor, allowing evaluators to link data for clients who participated in multiple sessions.

The **Client Satisfaction Survey** was designed to gather data from service users about their experiences of counselling services. The instrument was a short, two-page, self-completion survey offered in either paper or online formats. It contained eight questions: two gather demographic information on the client (age, gender); five focusing on the counselling session, and one question asking clients to record if they received assistance in completing the survey¹⁰. There were small differences between the surveys offered in the six countries, reflecting the different contexts in which the guidance was offered and the different objectives of various programmes.

Both instruments were developed by IOE in close collaboration with the country partners in order that the instruments were sufficiently sensitive to the target groups involved and to national data protection regulations and concerns. These tools were finalised in autumn 2015.

Beginning in January 2017 to April 2017, a **follow-up survey** was conducted with 31 clients. This survey sought to collect longitudinal outcome data from clients, in order to provide evidence on programme effects. The survey also collected quantitative and qualitative data on clients' perspectives on the programme and its impacts on their lives.

Though the follow-up survey was conducted in as rigorous a manner as possible, any conclusions drawn from it must be considered tentative: the limited time period of the evaluation means that only short-term outcomes could be assessed. Furthermore, participation in the follow-up survey was voluntary and thus non-representative; thus it is not possible to generalise from the survey findings to the broader group of GOAL clients. That being said, the survey may provide valuable insights into the experiences and outcomes of particular clients or subgroups of clients. As discussed in Section 2.1, this evidence may thus contribute to programme theory regarding how to meet the needs of such clients.

The 31 clients in follow-up survey were reached via phone after receiving their contact information from the sites. Although the sites provided telephone numbers of 50 GOAL clients, it was not possible to get in contact with around one-third of them due to changed contact details. A very few of those reached have refused to participate in the survey. The follow-up survey participants reached have completed their counselling from two to eight months ago. A follow-up survey questionnaire with mainly closed questions was filled in during the phone conversation. After the conversation data was entered into a data template. The open responses were transcribed and later entered into the data template. The main challenge was to agree with clients about the suitable time for phone-interview (usually after working hours). No particular resistance to take part in the follow-up survey was observed, nevertheless clients found it difficult to open up about their experiences.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data was collected at two different stages over the life of the programme. The first stage (Wave 1) of qualitative data collection took place in March-April 2016. The second stage of qualitative data collection took place in March-April 2017. By collecting such data in two waves

¹⁰ It was anticipated that low literacy levels, or migrants' low skills in the national language, might prevent some clients from completing the survey without assistance.

rather than only one, the evaluation is able to provide a longitudinal focus on issues explored through the qualitative analysis.

During each data collection wave, **semi-structured qualitative interviews and/or focus groups** were conducted with a range of programme stakeholders. In the first stage of qualitative data collection, four topic guides were developed by IOE to assist local evaluators in Wave 1 data gathering and to ensure consistency across the programme locations: **1) Programme Staff; 2) Programme Partners; 3) Policy Actors; and 4) Service Users**. A fifth Topic Guide, used in Iceland only, combined questions for Programme Partners and Policy Actors.

Similar topic guides were developed for the **second wave of qualitative data collection**. However, the development of these later topic guides was led primarily by local evaluators in each country, in consultation with IOE. The second wave of topic guides was somewhat more targeted in terms of the issues that were focused on: after qualitative data from Wave 1 had been analysed, key issues requiring further exploration or understanding were highlighted. These issues then formed the basis for Wave 2 topic guide development.

In Wave 1, a short quantitative survey was administered to all **GOAL programme staff members** (not only those participating in qualitative interviews and focus groups) to gather some basic data on their educational background, their current employment, and their professional development and training.

Quantitative data about GOAL services were collected during the guidance session either by asking service-users specific questions from the data monitoring instrument or by the counsellor filling in information during or after the session. After the session each service user was asked to fill in a **paper-based client questionnaire** about their experience of the guidance. Completed client satisfaction surveys were collected in a sealed box. Before the start of Wave 1 data collection meetings were organised at each site to present the data monitoring template and the client survey to staff and discuss their use. After the first week of data collection, a second meeting was organised to answer any questions. **Staff did not report any specific problems or methodological issues with either instrument**. Before each session programme staff informed clients about the collection of data for GOAL purposes and guaranteed the anonymity of participants. Before the Wave 2 data collection meetings with counsellors in each site were repeated in order to discuss field trials, remind requirements for collection of field trial monitoring data and ethics of collecting client satisfaction survey.

Qualitative data (see Table 2.2) was collected using focus groups or one-to-one interviews. In both waves focus groups were organised with programme staff. They served as a good chance for cooperation and exchange of experiences. For policy actors in Wave 1 it was not possible to agree on a joint focus group due to their busy schedule and, instead, interviews were organised, whereas in Wave 2 a focus group was organised. For other qualitative interviewees (programme partners and service users) it was decided to organise interviews. In Wave 1, two one-to-one interviews with clients were organised followed by 6 phone interviews, whereas in Wave 2 only phone interviews with 31 clients were arranged to collect data for clients' follow-up survey.

Table 2.2. *Qualitative data approaches, Lithuania*

Type of participant and number reached	Wave 1 collection approach and number of participants	Wave 2 collection approach and number of participants
<u>Service users</u>	Interviews: one-to-one - 2 and phone - 6	Phone interviews - 31
<u>Programme Staff</u>	Focus Group - 4	Focus Group - 4
<u>Programme Partners</u>	One-to-one interviews - 4	One-to-one interviews - 4
<u>Policy actors</u>	One-to-one interviews - 6	Focus Group - 4

Evaluation manual

To ensure the collection of robust data and the consistency of instrument administration across the six countries, IOE created an **evaluation manual** containing guidelines for the use of the data collection tools. Version 1 of the manual (November 2015) included protocols for two quantitative instruments used in ongoing data collection. Version 2 (March 2016) added guidelines for the administration of the Wave 1 Topic Guides and other instruments, as well as guidance for completing the interim national reports. Version 3 (February 2017) provided guidance on the development and use of all Wave 2 data collection instruments, and guidelines for completing the final national reports.

2.4 Data analysis

In this **mixed methods evaluation**, a number of analytical approaches were used. Quantitative data were analysed using mainly **descriptive statistics**, e.g. frequencies, averages, group comparisons and cross-tabulations. For analysis of quantitative data the software package SPSS statistics and Excel were used. To merge Wave 1 and Wave 2 data some variables needed recoding. In Wave 1 report, most of the investigation relied on descriptive statistics, as **GOAL programme participant numbers was too small** for inferential statistical analysis. Wave 2 data collection allowed a more in-depth statistical analysis and examination of relations among client demographics, client education and employment history, client's goals expectations and barriers, achievement of guidance objectives and outcomes of guidance. Only those cross-tabulations with the statistical significance of a relationship at the .05 level ($p \leq .05$) are included in the report.

Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews were analysed using mainly thematic analysis around the topic guides that were explicitly linked to the main aims and objectives of the project. In addition, some typology analysis and group comparison analysis were also used.

2.5 Methodological challenges

Challenges for counsellors

No particular challenges were encountered by counsellors. **Both sites easily integrated the tool for collecting data from clients into their session and were positive about using similar data collection processes in the future on a regular basis.**

Quantitative data challenges

It was not possible to reach an equal representation of various target groups and more or less equal distribution of clients by demographic characteristics. Data was collected mainly from male clients (80%). There are two reasons for this: firstly, **males in Lithuania have a lower level of educational attainment** than females and comparatively few women belong to the group of low-educated adults; secondly, one of the two GOAL sites **offers training programmes primarily oriented towards traditional 'male' vocations** such as welding, construction, and driving.

Qualitative data challenges

Focus groups and interviews allowed for the collection of informative qualitative data. The key challenge to emerge is related to one-to-one and phone interviews with clients. **Clients with low levels of education found it challenging to summarise, analyse and reflect on their experiences.** Therefore, it was difficult to receive insights as to whether their expectations were met. It should be noted that majority of clients in the Lithuanian sample were receiving counselling services for the first time; therefore, findings on client satisfaction with the services should be interpreted with caution.

It was rather challenging to agree about time for focus group with policy actors and, therefore, during Wave 1 one-to-one interviews were organised instead.

Data analysis challenges

The exit data could not be analysed in-depth, because monitoring data from Wave 1 clients was collected from one session with no exit data, whereas in Wave 2 exit data from second session was recorded for 50 clients. Some clients have showed up for subsequent sessions but information from these sessions was not entered into data monitoring template.

Challenges of collecting data on programme impacts

Because the programme was rolled out at the same time as an extensive European Social Fund (ESF) funded public employment services (PES) measures for unemployed and one of the sites was involved in these PES measures, some of their partners and policy actors found it difficult to position GOAL programme as a separate guidance programme.

2.6 Key methodological findings

In principle, no problems were faced during quantitative and qualitative data collection. Both sites managed to reach the planned amount of service users and collect client satisfaction questionnaires from each of them.

In Wave 1, data was collected mainly from male clients. In Wave 2, GOAL managed to reach a more diverse client groups.

Each target group (policy actors, programme staff, partners and clients) was included in the qualitative research strand. Focus groups and interviews were used to collect informative qualitative data, although clients found it challenging to summarise, analyse and reflect on their experience.

3 Programme Participants and Staff

This chapter provides descriptive data on the GOAL programme participants and stakeholders in Lithuania. These data are drawn from quantitative and qualitative data gathered during Wave 1 and 2. The intention in this chapter is to develop a picture of: a) the target client group in Lithuania, and b) GOAL staff. In doing so, we seek to provide context for the programme’s objectives, successes and challenges. Programme partners are discussed in Chapter 5.

In Lithuania GOAL sought to provide guidance services to low-educated unemployed adults with no or low qualifications, and to early school leavers.

3.1 Service users

During the full evaluation period, 100 people were offered guidance and counselling services, 50 at each intervention site. In Wave 1, due to time and resource limitations clients were offered just one session. In Wave 2 it was agreed with the sites to arrange two and more sessions. Exit data was collected from a second session.

Demographic characteristics

Target group

The largest groups of service users were job-seekers/unemployed and early school leavers. Compared to Wave 1 where these two client groups dominated (respectively, 46% and 42%), in Wave 2 counselling services were offered to more diverse service users, including those over 50 and employed persons with a low qualification (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Analysing the dominating target groups in each of the sites, a clear segmentation can be observed since Vilnius Adult Education Centre (VAEC) focuses on early school leavers and Vilnius Jerusalem Labour Market Training Centre (VJLMTC) focuses on those in search for job and unemployed.

Table 3.1. Target group of service users, Lithuania

	All		VAEC		VJLMTC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/unemployed	55	55	11	22	44	88
Early School Leaver	29	29	29	58	-	-
Detainee	1	1	1	2	-	-
Over-50	10	10	6	12	4	8
Employed (& low educated)	5	5	3	6	2	4
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

Table 3.2. Target group of service users by Wave, Lithuania

	All		Wave 1		Wave 2	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/unemployed	55	55	23	46	32	64
Early School Leaver	29	29	21	42	8	16
Detainee	1	1			1	2
Over-50	10	10	3	6	7	14
Employed (& low educated)	5	5	3	6	2	4
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

Gender

20 of the 100 GOAL programme participants were females (see Table 3.3). In Wave 1, only 5 of 50 were female. Although this gender imbalance persisted, in Wave 2 one of the sites, as requested, managed to reach more female clients (15 female clients in Wave 2). The gender imbalance can be **explained by the nature of the intervention sites**: the Vilnius Jerusalem Labour Market Training Centre (VJLMTC) offers training programmes in traditionally male occupations including the metal industry, and engineering and construction sectors and the Vilnius Adult Education Centre (VAEC) offers general education programme as a second chance for early school leavers, many of whom are males. Nineteen of 20 female clients were served by VAEC.

Table 3.3. Gender profile of service users, Lithuania

	All		Wave 1		Wave 2	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	80	80	45	90	35	70
Female	20	20	5	10	15	30
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

Table 3.4 shows variations in male and female clients' representation in target groups. The largest share of females was classified as early school leavers but due to their small number males represented a majority in almost all target groups except for elderly clients where female and male clients represented 50% each.

Table 3.4. Characteristics of service users: Target group by gender, Lithuania

	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/unemployed	49	89	6	11

Early School Leaver	21	72	8	28
Detainee	1	100	-	-
Over-50	5	50	5	50
Employed (& low educated)	4	80	1	20
Total	80	80	20	20

Age

The majority of service users were adults under 35 (65%, see Table 3.5). Comparison of the age profile of service users by the site shows that VJLMTC is focusing its services on a **working age population** (19-55 years) and VAEC has a **broader focus**. The main differences among the GOAL sites were in the client groups below 18 and between 26 and 35: in VJLMTC, no clients belonged to the youngest age group as it offers training for persons over 18, whereas in VAEC this group (18 and under) represented one-fifth of clients. On the other hand, clients aged 26-35 represented 12% of service users in VAEC, whereas in VJLMTC it was the largest group (40%) of service users.

As the data summarised in table 3.6 demonstrate, female service users tended to be slightly older than male service users. Analysing the age characteristics of target groups (Table 3.7), it can be noted that majority of early school leavers (more than 70%) were below 25, whereas more than 60% of job-seekers / unemployed were aged 26-55.

Table 3.5. Age profile of service users, Lithuania

	All		VAEC		VJLMTC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	10	10	10	20	-	-
19-25	28	28	15	30	13	26
26-35	26	26	6	12	20	40
36-55	29	29	16	32	13	26
56-65	7	7	3	6	4	8
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

Table 3.6. Characteristics of service users: Gender by age, Lithuania

Age bands	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
18 and under				
0-18	7	9	3	15
19-25	23	29	5	25
26-35	26	33	1	5
36-55	21	26	8	40
56-65	3	4	3	15
Total	80	100	20	100

Table 3.7. Characteristics of service users: Target group by age, Lithuania, percentages are given in brackets

	0-18	19-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	Total
Job-seeker/unemployed	-	16 (29)	19 (35)	17 (31)	3 (5)	55 (100)
Early School Leaver	10 (34)	11 (38)	4 (14)	4 (14)	-	29 (100)
Detainee	-	1 (100)	-	-	-	1 (100)
Over-50	-	-	-	6 (60)	4 (40)	10 (100)
Employed (& low educated)	-	-	3 (60)	2 (40)	-	5 (100)
Total	10	28	26	29	7	100 (100)

Residence and home language

As seen in Tables 3.8 and 3.9 **the great majority of service users (98%) were Lithuanian citizens**, 55% of whom use Lithuanian language as their home language: 30% spoke Russian, 14% Polish and 1% English. This service user profile reflects **the general composition of the Vilnius** population in terms of nationalities and language spoken. According to sociolinguistic map of Lithuanian towns (<http://www.kalbuzemelapis.flf.vu.lt/>), only 59.7% of population in Vilnius consider Lithuanian to be their home language, whereas in Lithuania as a whole, this figure is 81.2%. More Russian speaking clients was served by VJLMTC (42%).

Table 3.8. Residence status of service users, Lithuania

	N	%
National/citizen	98	98
EU national	1	1
Non-EU national with residence permit	1	1
Total	100	100

Table 3.9. Home language(s) of service users, Lithuania

	All		VAEC		VJLMTC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	1	1	1	2	0	0
Polish	14	14	10	20	4	8
Lithuanian	55	55	30	60	25	50
Russian	30	30	9	18	21	42
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

As the data summarised in Table 3.10 demonstrate service users who are native speakers tend to be slightly younger than service users from linguistic minorities.

Table 3.10. Home language(s) of service users, Lithuania: Age by home language

Age band	Lithuanian		Linguistic minority	
	N	%	N	%
0-18	8	15	2	4
19-25	17	31	11	24
26-35	16	29	11	24
36-55	11	20	18	40
56-65	3	5	3	7
Total	55	100	45	100

Education and employment characteristics

Highest educational level

More than a half of service users (52%) have attained primary or lower secondary education level (see Table 3.11.) and 42% of service users have attained upper secondary education (either general or vocational). Large differences were observed when analysing education level of service users at each site: VAEC clients had a lower level of education compared to clients of VJLMTC, however, it was noted that more than half of VJLMTC clients had no vocationally-oriented qualification, i.e. their education was of academic orientation and they graduated general education school or tertiary education institution. In Lithuania tertiary education degree is not considered a 'qualification'.

Table 3.11. Highest education level of service users, Lithuania

	All		VAEC		VJLMTC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not completed primary education	1	1	1	2	-	-
Primary education	23	23	21	42	2	4
Lower secondary education	29	29	23	46	6	12
General upper secondary education (gymnasium)	30	30	2	4	28	56
Vocational education (upper secondary level)	12	12	1	2	11	22
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	1	1	-	-	1	2
Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)	4	4	2	4	2	4
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

As demonstrated in Table 3.12, many early school leavers had only completed primary education (19 of 29) whereas almost half of clients categorised by counsellors as job-seekers/ unemployed persons (27 of 55) have achieved upper secondary education level (with no vocational qualification).

Table 3.12. *Characteristics of service users: Target group by highest education level of service users, Lithuania*

	Job-seeker/ unemployed	Early School Leaver	Detainee	Over- 50	Employed (& low educated)
Not completed primary education	-	-	-	1	-
Primary education	2	19		1	1
Lower secondary education	14	10	1	2	2
General upper secondary education (gymnasium)	27	-	-	2	1
Vocational education (upper secondary level)	9	-	-	3	-
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	-	-	-	-	1
Tertiary education	3	-	-	1	-
Total	55	29	1	10	5

When analysing clients' information by gender and highest education level it was observed that majority of female clients have achieved only primary education.

Current education and learning

Fewer than half (39 of 100) of service users were in some kind of education at the time they came to the GOAL programme and **just nine out of these 39 confirmed that they were working towards a qualification** (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13. *'Are you working towards a qualification?', Lithuania*

	N	%	Valid, %
No	30	38	77
Yes	9	8	23
Total	39	46	100
Not applicable	61	54	
Total	100	100	

Employment status

As shown in Table 3.14, **63% of service users were unemployed or inactive** and 34% were employed. The data about current employment status by education level (Table 3.16) does not allow us to draw conclusions about the connections between employment status and participation in education.

Table 3.14. *Current employment status of service users, Lithuania*

	N	%
Employed full-time	21	21
Employed part-time	8	8
Self-employed	5	5
Unemployed	60	60
Inactive	3	3
Other	3	3
Total	50	100

Table 3.15. *Highest education level of service users by current employment status, Lithuania, percentages are given in brackets*

	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	Other
Not completed primary education	1 (3)	-	-	-
Primary education	11 (32)	9 (15)	1 (33)	2 (67)
Lower secondary education	11 (32)	15 (25)	2 (67)	1 (33)
General upper secondary education (gymnasium)	6 (18)	24 (40)	-	-
Vocational education (upper secondary level)	2 (6)	10 (17)	-	-
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	1 (3)	-	-	-
Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)	2 (6)	2 (3)	-	-
Total	34 (100)	60 (100)	3 (100)	3 (100)

Previous guidance

The majority of service users (78%) reported that they had not received guidance prior to their involvement with GOAL (Table 3.16). This finding represents the general situation of adult guidance and orientation in Lithuania. Although the guidance and orientation system has recently started gaining proper attention from policymakers, the main focus is put on guidance of school-age students. It is also an important observation for the evaluation, indicating a **lack of a tradition of adults seeking educational guidance**. This may be linked to the very positive assessment of guidance

services within GOAL by clients: they lacked previous guidance experiences which they could compare GOAL to.

Table 3.16. *Previously received guidance (as an adult), Lithuania*

	N	%
No	78	78
Yes	21	21
Don't know	1	1
Total	100	100

Of those clients who received guidance (N=21), 12 were unemployed and seven were employed, 16 were males and five were females.

Previous barriers to improving education or career

Clients were asked about barriers that stopped from learning in the past. The largest share of service users (40 out of 100) chose the answer 'other personal reasons' (Table 3.17). As the list of possible responses offered a wide choice of possible barriers, it is very likely that the option of 'other reasons' provides clients with **the chance to avoid answering the question**. The other common reasons indicated were: 'too busy at work' and 'too busy taking care of family'.

Table 3.17. *'What sort of things have stopped you improving your education or your career up till now? Lithuania (N=100)*

	N	% from cases	% from responses
Insufficient basic skills (e.g. cannot read or write, poor reading and/or writing skills)	2	1	2
Lack of prerequisites (entrance requirements)	1	1	1
Too busy at work	18	12	18
Too busy taking care of family	18	12	18
Cost of education or training was too expensive/Could not afford it	9	6	9
Lack of information about courses	5	3	5
No suitable courses available	4	3	4
Courses offered at an inconvenient time/place	1	1	1
Negative prior experience with schooling	11	7	11
Learning disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia)	5	3	5
Age	1	1	1

Health problems (incl. mental and physical health)	3	2	3
Lack of confidence	9	6	9
Lack of motivation	11	7	11
Lack of support from family	4	3	4
Lack of support from employer	1	1	1
Lack of transport or mobility	2	1	2
Criminal record in the past	2	1	2
Other personal reasons	40	27	40
Other	4	3	4

Self-efficacy

In the initial guidance session clients were asked to answer three questions concerning their own judgment about their self-efficacy, i.e. their self-perceived ability to achieve desired outcomes in life. Each question was made up of two statements, one presenting a more positive view and the other a more negative view. The positive statement gave the client a score of 1 point for that question and the negative one gave them a score of 0 points; thus the scores for the whole scale could range from 0-3 points, with 3 representing a client who chose the positive statement for all three questions and who thus had the highest possible score on the self-efficacy scale. The lowest possible score was 0.

For more than half of service users (55%) their self-efficacy score was 3 and for 29% it was 2 (see Table 3.18). For 16 service users the score was 0 or 1. Such a result, which is perhaps surprising given the client group's challenges, may potentially be explained by selection bias: those who seek guidance may have higher self-efficacy.

Table 3.18. *Self-efficacy scores, Lithuania*

Score	N	%
1	11	11
2	29	29
3	55	55
0	5	5
Total	100	100

Attitudes to learning

As shown in Table 3.19, the vast majority of service users (90%) reported a positive attitude towards learning new things. However, more than a half of this group (N=49) answered that they like learning new things 'a bit' and not 'a lot'. Monitoring data does not show significant differences in attitudes to learning by demographic characteristics (age, gender).

Table 3.19. *‘Do you like learning new things?’, Lithuania*

	N	%
No, not really	10	10
Yes, a bit	49	49
Yes, a lot	41	41
Total	100	100

Learning goals

Eighty eight respondents indicated that they have specific learning goals, the most frequent being to **acquire a specific qualification** (see Table 3.20). This was the case for both sites and it strongly suggests that those who show up for counselling are motivated to learn new things and even have an ambition to change a qualification and, even more, they more or less know what type of qualification they would like to achieve in the future.

Table 3.20. *‘Do you have specific learning goals?’, Lithuania (N=88)*

	N	% from cases	% from responses
Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification	44	39	50
Yes, I want to improve my skills in general	21	19	24
Yes, I want to achieve a qualification of any sort	18	16	20
Yes, I want to improve my skills in a specific area	6	5	7
Yes, I need this learning to find a job	11	10	13
Yes, I need this training for my current job	6	5	7
No, I do not have any specific objectives	6	5	7
Total	112	100	127

When analysing the choice of answers by gender, it was observed that majority of male clients (40 from 71) have chosen the answer ‘Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification’ (only 4 of 17 female have chosen this answer). Female clients tended to choose the answers ‘Yes, I want to improve my skills in general’ (with 9 out of 17 choosing this answer, compared to 12 males out 71) and ‘Yes, I need this learning to find a job’ (6 of 17 females, 5 of 71 males).

Some differences emerged when comparing the answers about learning goals of clients with: a) some previous history of guidance and b) without such a history. Fifteen of 21 clients (71%) who have previously received career/educational guidance during adulthood chose the answer ‘I want to achieve a specific qualification’, whereas the corresponding share among those who did not have prior experience of counselling was 43%.

Career goals

In Lithuanian adult education institutions providing guidance and orientation services there is no strict division into learning guidance and job guidance; sessions usually cover both dimensions. Only

27 service users were recorded as users of job guidance only, therefore due to small amount of answers further analysis of responses is not possible (see Table 3.21).

Table 3.21. ‘Does your client have clear career goals?’, Lithuania

	N	%	Valid %
No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	9	9	33.3
Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	9	9	33.3
Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	9	9	33.3
Total	27	27	100
Not applicable	73	73	
Total	100	100	

Challenges faced by clients based on qualitative data

VJLMTC identified a number of challenges faced by GOAL service users: the professions offered by VJLMTC were mainly those which were traditionally male oriented and little could be offered to females; VJLMTC was oriented to the specific result – attracting learners to choose training in VJLMTC – therefore **in Wave 1 a deeper analysis of clients’ interests and needs was not widely used**; if clients were unmotivated and not sure about their objectives only very limited support could be given to make one step up. VJLMTC admitted that during Wave 1 it had **no real options to keep clients in the guidance process for a longer period of time due to lack of resources**, but in Wave 2 it was agreed to expand the number of sessions per client.

As reported by staff, the main challenge for VAEC clients was to find time for guidance sessions and education in general, because many of these clients lived busy lives. VAEC is open in the evenings, but the **opportunities for individual consultations were limited because clients were attending lessons at the same time**. Programme staff also noted that clients may be somewhat **reluctant** to attend guidance sessions as they are not pupils anymore.

Partners from public employment services reported that the main challenge faced by clients is the lack of motivation. Some clients also have psychological problems and low levels of self-confidence. It can happen that low interest in learning may be caused by economic reasons – for example individuals may have an illegal job or be receiving social benefits. According to the employment service, there is a group of clients who come from families where generations live from benefits and it is very difficult to motivate such persons. One of the GOAL partner organisations also observed that some clients, even young ones, have health problems that prevent them from getting employed after finishing their training course.

Policy actors felt that **the largest challenge for GOAL service providers was to reach clients**. A general opinion of policy actors was that the Lithuania education system is rather well developed and, in principle, everyone can get an education and qualifications. Therefore, people who are low-

educated often have very personal, and often very sensitive reasons for not having achieved this. According to policy actors, **low educated people often lack the motivation to learn and make changes in their life**. This is compounded by the fact that they are not aware where to search for information, and sometimes due to their low education they find it **difficult to recognise and express what they want, or are not ready to ask for and receive assistance**. Therefore, 'outreach' services have to function so, that to find these persons and provide them with a complex of services: information on learning and jobs available, counselling, including psychological counselling when needed, etc. Policy actors reported on such cases when there is nothing to offer to a person with a very low education level in terms of education or jobs. An observation was made that **guidance should be more linked to identifying adults' literacy problems and possible ways for improving it**. Low educated people may lack literacy skills and thus are unable to learn or find a better job.

3.2 Programme staff

GOAL services were provided by four female counsellors, two in each intervention site. Within the GOAL programme, one counsellor of VJLMTC was replaced with another counsellor because of a career change. Two of the counsellors were aged under 30 (in Wave 1 – one counsellor), one of the counsellors were aged between 41-50 years (in Wave 2 – two counsellors), and one counsellor is over 50. Chapter 6, which focuses on counsellor competences, will report on staff's experience, education and training.

3.3 Key findings

A typical GOAL service user in Lithuania is **a male under 35, job-seeker/unemployed or early school leaver with a primary or lower secondary education level**. The majority of service users reported that they had not previously received guidance, with just 21 of the 100 receiving some kind of guidance as adults. This indicates a lack of tradition for seeking educational guidance and low availability of such services.

The programme staff during focus groups confirmed that there were differences among service users' categories in different sites. Programme staff from VJLMTC described their main target within GOAL programme **as employed persons sent by their employers for skills evaluation and retraining, and unemployed adults having qualifications** which did not correspond to modern requirements or were no longer in demand in the labour market. Many of unemployed clients under 29 years have just finalised general education school or have dropped out because of some reasons. There was also a group of clients who were in their fifties and older but they were not needed by employers especially if their occupation required physical strength and good health. Another group was persons who came to the site because they wanted to requalify or learn some additional skills. And there was a group of persons who returned from abroad, wanted to learn some occupation and then emigrate again.

Programme staff from VAEC described their target group as those **without lower or upper secondary education level**, either drop outs or those receiving social benefits. They came to VAEC to finalise their general education so as to progress to VET or higher education or, as in case of GOAL, they

found out about services from friends, colleagues or family, and came for counselling about the change of their career according to their interests and about possible training options for receiving a qualification. In this respect counselling sessions focused on interests and personal characteristics were very appropriate because clients started making their plans so as to avoid mistakes in making decisions about their career orientation. In Wave 2 the site managed to attract and consult more female clients of older age who typically had not finalised their lower or upper secondary education and, in addition, were not satisfied with their current employment situation or were unemployed. The data reveal that current GOAL service users are motivated to seek guidance because they have shown up for a session after hearing or reading about it and are determined to learn new things and even gain a new qualification. Programme staff reported that **it is easy to work with motivated clients who want to change something in their life**. Programme staff and policy actors admitted that the largest challenge is reaching unmotivated people. Very often due to their low education level potential clients have difficulties not only in finding the relevant services, but also in expressing their interests.

A question about defining and estimating a GOAL-type target group was raised by policy actors who complained about a lack of evidence on how many low-motivated and low-educated adults there are in Lithuania. Taking into account the rather high education level of the Lithuanian population (in 2015, 80% of population over 15 have gained at least upper-secondary education), and that level of education is gradually increasing, a focus of GOAL on low-educated adults is still relevant for Lithuania in terms of reaching this target group. Statistical data shows obvious **differences between town and rural areas in education** level: 29% of the rural population has an education level below upper-secondary, whereas in towns this share is just 15%.

GOAL sites provide very targeted services: either general education or vocationally oriented training. Policy actors during focus group said that what seems to be lacking is a linkage to and focus on **guidance that helps to identify adults' literacy problems** and offers possible ways for improving literacy. The results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey of Adult Skills revealed a relatively high prevalence of poor literacy, numeracy and digital problem-solving skills.¹¹ Low educated people may lack literacy skills and thus be severely hampered in their efforts to learn or find a better job.

3.4 Key Implications

Implications for future programme development

Taking into account the relatively poor literacy, numeracy and digital problem-solving skills of adult population that were revealed by PIAAC survey, two implications can be considered. First, **adult guidance services may wish to include a focus on basic skills**, for example by making efforts to identify and improve the basic skills of adults with low levels of education, an approach currently being piloted as part of GOAL in the Netherlands. There may be an opportunity to learn from the Netherlands' experience, especially if low basic skills become a higher priority issue for government

¹¹ OECD (2016). Skills matter: further results from the survey of adult skills.
<http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Lithuania.pdf>

following the release of these PIAAC results. A second implication relates to poor Lithuanian results on the problem-solving in technology rich environment aspect of PIAAC. These poor results suggest that **low-educated adults may struggle to use online guidance resources**, unless these resources are specifically designed for this target group. This potential challenge highlights the need for face-to-face counselling for this target group.

4 The GOAL guidance service

This chapter provides an overview of descriptive information on the GOAL guidance service. Looking across Europe as a whole, the culture of **adult guidance is underdeveloped**, especially among adults who are traditionally less likely to engage in work-related and other forms of learning, such as those with low literacy and numeracy skills. There is a perception – which to some extent is still borne out by practice – that guidance is almost exclusively a careers-focused service offered in schools at or near the point where students are completing their compulsory education.

According to the ELGPN¹², guidance within adult education typically takes three forms:

- *Pre-entry guidance* which supports adults to consider whether to participate in adult learning and what programmes might be right for them.
- *Guidance as an integral part of adult education programmes*. Some adult education programmes are strongly focused on career planning or on the development of employability and career management skills: in these cases lifelong guidance is often built into the core of the programme.
- *Exit guidance* which supports graduates of adult education programmes to consider how they can use what they have learned to support their progress in further learning and work.

4.1 Guidance activities and processes: Quantitative findings

Reasons for seeking guidance

In the monitoring data, service users reported different reasons for seeking guidance (see Table 4.1.). The most common reasons selected were **exploring educational opportunities, assistance with job seeking and interest assessment**. Interestingly enough, only eight clients indicated validation of prior learning or competences as a reason for seeking guidance and none selected it as the main reason. Before the start of the GOAL project there was interest in Lithuania on focusing on the validation of prior learning component of guidance sessions. However, the results from both Waves suggest that this aspect of the guidance service is not an important motivation for low-educated adults. It is possible that this lack of interest is a consequence of **low awareness about VPL and its benefits among the target group** (and in society in general). Furthermore, education institutions lack experience in applying VPL in practice.

¹² Hooley, T. (2014) The evidence base on lifelong guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice. European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

Table 4.1. Client reasons for seeking guidance, Lithuania (N=100)

	N	% from cases	% from responses
To explore educational opportunities	70	32	70
To get assistance with job seeking	32	15	32
To find links between personal interest and occupational/ educational opportunities (Interest assessment)	27	12	27
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	15	7	15
Because of personal issues	18	8	18
To find financial resources for learning	22	10	22
To validate existing competences/prior learning	8	4	8
To get assistance with writing a CV	8	4	8
To get information about different institutions and their roles	15	7	15
Other	2	1	2
Total	217	100	217

When asked to select one **main reason** for seeking guidance, clients pointed out assistance with exploring educational opportunities (44%) and assistance with job seeking (22%) (see Table 4.2). One of the sites, VJLMTC, provides assistance with both, job seeking and training opportunities. The fact that a larger share of clients sought guidance in order to explore educational opportunities confirms the high expectations by clients towards training and its outcomes.

Table 4.2. Main reason for seeking guidance, Lithuania

	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	44	44
To find links between personal interest and occupational/ educational opportunities (Interest assessment)	10	10
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	4	4
To find financial resources for learning	8	8
To get assistance with job seeking	22	22
To get assistance with writing a CV	1	1
To get information about different institutions and their roles	5	5
Because of personal issues	5	5
Other	1	1
Total	100	100

Further analysis of responses by education level and gender did not reveal significant differences. Analysis of responses by target group (see Table B 1. in the Annex) showed that clients who were job-seekers/unemployed sought guidance to get assistance with job-seeking and exploring educational opportunities. Early school leavers cited the reasons of exploring educational opportunities and interest assessment; those aged over 50 were motivated by the opportunity to get assistance with

interest assessment and with job seeking; and clients who were employed and low educated were exploring their educational opportunities. The results from both Waves suggest that **guidance services should offer a package of services because different target groups come to guidance for different reasons.**

Contact type

The majority of clients (94%) received **individual face-to-face consultations** and only three of the 50 attended group consultations (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. *Type of contact, Lithuania*

	N	%
Face-To-Face Individual	97	97
Face-To-Face Group	3	3
Total	100	100

Length of session

As summarised in Table 4.4 **most of sessions lasted 31 minutes** and longer (66%). In Wave 1 the most typical session lasted 45 minutes (42% of Wave 1 sessions), the shortest one 30 minutes and the longest one 125 minutes. The typical duration of the Wave 1 session was related to the fact that one of the sites worked according to the general education school timetable in which lessons last for 45 minutes or longer. In Wave 2 the sites took a different approach in arranging several sessions and in consequence a part of first sessions by VJLMTC were shorter than in Wave 1 (up to 20 minutes), the shortest session lasted for 18 minutes, the longest one – for 90 minutes.

Table 4.4. *Length of session, Lithuania*

	All		VAEC		VJLMTC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 20 min	14	14	1	2	13	26
21-30 min	16	16	10	20	6	12
31-60 min	60	60	29	58	31	62
61 min and above	10	10	10	20	13	0
Total	100	100	50	100	50	100

Focus of the sessions

Since the main profile of the sites is the provision of training, in the monitoring data counsellors indicated that the main focus of the sessions was **discussion of learning opportunities** (66%); for 34% of clients the session concentrated on search for work (Table 4.5). These service users attended the session in VJLMTC where guidance is related to training programmes and jobs in concrete labour market sectors (construction and metal industry).

For seven clients of VAEC sessions focused more on personal issues (personal interests, career plan, increasing motivation, self-cognition).

Table 4.5. *Focus of session, Lithuania*

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
	N	% of clients	N	% of clients	N	% of clients
Work/ employer Learning opportunities (qualifications)	17	34	4	8	21	21
Validation of prior learning	-	-	1	2	1	1
Other	-	-	7	14	7	7
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In the client satisfaction survey, all clients were asked to indicate the focus of the session. A majority of service users (73%) recorded that they talked about **learning** (see Table 4.6). Although VPL was not underlined as the focus of the sessions by counsellors a small share of service users reported that they also talked about VPL.

Table 4.6. *'What did you talk about with your counsellor today', Lithuania (N=100)*

	N	% from cases	% from responses
Jobs	55	36	55
Learning	73	47	73
VPL	27	17	27
Total	155	100	155

A follow-up survey gave a slightly different picture (Table 4.7). The majority of clients (39%) claimed that they set both types of goals during counselling (education and employment). The reason for this could be because in Lithuanian model there is a thin line between the two - the sessions usually addressed both elements. Only one client stressed employment related goals and eight clients stressed education related goals. Almost a third of clients (ten out of 31 or 10/31) stated that they did not set particular goals during counselling.

Table 4.7. *'Did you set any education related and / or employment related goals or aims during counselling, Lithuania (N=31)*

	N	%
Educational/learning/training goals	8	26
Employment/career/job goals	1	3
Both, education related and employment related goals	12	39

No goals set	10	32
Total	31	100

Route to guidance: type of referring organisation

As demonstrated in Table 4.8 service users reached GOAL programme in different ways: they were referred by educational institutions and educational support services (34%) and by (un)employment services (31%), found about it individually (26%). A very small share of clients (2%) were referred by social welfare services. This leads us to surmise that **social welfare services provide very little guidance and counselling about possible learning**. This opinion was also expressed by policy actors during interviews and focus groups; that municipal services do not offer counselling on education and career for their clients.

Table 4.8. *Type of referring organisation, Lithuania*

	N	%
Self-referral	26	26
(Un) employment services	31	31
Social welfare services	2	2
Educational institutions	16	16
Educational support services	18	18
Integration / migration services	1	1
Socio-cultural institutions	3	3
Other	3	3
Total	100	100

Clients' counselling needs

Clients counselling needs ranged from information services (exploring educational opportunities, assistance with job seeking) to the analysis of personal interests and corresponding occupational/ educational opportunities and even help with personal issues. Although taking into account the client monitoring data (Table 4.2) it can be presumed that for a large share of clients one information session about educational opportunities is sufficient, but the experience from GOAL suggests that GOAL sessions were more than informing clients about the different learning options and educational institutions. Due to the background of clients (low educated, no qualification, early school leavers) it is apparent that it is not possible to answer all questions and motivate clients to take further steps in just one session.

The opinion of staff was that majority of clients would need at least two-three sessions. During a focus group we conducted one of the counsellors stated that *'sessions are different with a client who knows what he wants, and the one who doesn't... And unfortunately we observe an increasing*

number of people, especially young people, who claim that they don't know where they're heading. When a person knows what he needs, concrete help with search in information databases can be provided and then one or two sessions is enough. If a person is not sure about his needs, more time is needed with, ideally, a break in sessions.' Usually after the first session counsellors are able to get an estimate of number of sessions needed (one, two or three). Another counsellor said that even two-three sessions are not enough to build a trustworthy relationship between counsellor and client. According to the counsellors, when a person is unsure of what he wants, practical tasks and site visits to employers or training institutions are time consuming. Another issue raised in the focus groups was that for those clients who live an isolated and socially deprived life, meetings with counsellors served both as a motivation tool and as a self-control: they enjoyed coming to sessions, and talking to their counsellor while the counsellor asked them to report about the steps taken.

4.2 Guidance activities and processes: Qualitative findings

Seeking to meet client needs: The guidance process

Both sites were already offering guidance and orientation services for low-skilled persons and the GOAL programme was not a new activity to them. Both sites are working to attract future learners and thus guidance is oriented towards identifying an individual's interests and capacities and then offering a relevant training either within or outside the site. VJLMTC is more proactive in its outreach strategy for low-skilled people – it organises information campaigns in the local employment office to invite potential learners for guidance sessions. VAEC is more focused on working with newly enrolled students (and, in some cases, potential learners) to motivate them to learn in VAEC and to continue learning after graduation.

In Wave 1 due to time and resource limitations of the sites, a model of one guidance session was adopted. In Wave 2 it was agreed to arrange at least two guidance sessions so as to see the effect of having more than one session.

Although each case is individual and there is no standard session sequence and duration, a guidance session can be roughly divided into the following phases:

- introduction and presentation of GOAL programme:
 - acquaintance of client and counsellor, presentation of institution and short context information about counselling session, GOAL programme, general rules;
- clarifying of personal objectives:
 - exploring if a person knows what he wants, what is the reason why he came to counselling, what he wants to change;
- mapping the client's current situation:
 - identification of client's education and professional experience;
- identifying career or education perspectives:
 - exploring of client capacities, hobbies and interests, in which subjects he was strong in school, his other strengths and weaknesses. Interests tests were used to aid with this process as required;
 - discussion on problems encountered, failures and lessons learnt;

- discussion about possible training and job options;
- information about financial support (e.g. ESF funded projects) available;
- information about prospects of career if one or another option is chosen.
- choosing learning and job possibilities:
 - exploring information on a particular training programmes/ courses, particular educational institutions, vacancies;
 - analysing training programmes or courses based on client interests;
 - making a selection of training programme ('crystallising phase');
- agreement on next steps taken by client:
 - creation of action plan: what are the next steps for client (e.g. contacting training institution, search for additional information, performing career/ occupational tests, etc.);
 - agreement about next session (if relevant) or other ways of feedback about the decision of client.

During follow-up sessions, clients informed counsellors about progress and obstacles encountered. Depending on situation the follow-up sessions included: completion of additional interests, motivation and/or deeper personality tests, visits to workshops/ training classes, interviews with teaching staff or professionals in the field, assistance in completing CV and writing motivation letter, advise how to communicate with employer or training institution, how to present themselves during employment interview.

This model usually applied to clients who were indecisive of what they wanted to do. As the clients cases below demonstrate if clients more or less knew what they wanted to, some phases (e.g. interests assessment) were skipped.

According to programme staff, the underlying **philosophy of guidance services** was to take into account each individual client, therefore, the sessions were dedicated to better identifying clients' needs, skills and competences.

GOAL staff chose counselling methods and tools on the basis of each client's skills, motivation and competences. This implies that counsellors need to be highly flexible and able to adapt to the clients' needs with strong interpersonal skills.

During sessions counsellors gathered information about the client through an individual semi-structured interview, performed simple tests to discuss personal strengths and weaknesses, to identify the needs and interests and level of skills. VJLMTC underlined that it linked guidance with a **practical presentation of the qualifications available** in the centre and the opportunity the centre provided to 'try-out' certain professions. VJLTC regarded this as a strength of the service and this was reconfirmed by their partners who valued opportunity given to clients to better explore learning and job opportunities. VAEC gave priority to **developing a client's career plan**. Both sites admitted that majority of guidance tools available are oriented towards school-age students and it takes some effort to adapt them to adults. Moreover, in the focus group it was mentioned that what is needed is a national database that would inform people as to where adult guidance services are available. This

was also mentioned by policy actors in the interview. The current national educational information system, AIKOS, compiles information about learning opportunities but is not sufficiently attractive and 'client-friendly' to provide the whole spectrum of learning opportunities.

When comparing work with **motivated clients** who knew what they wanted and those who were in doubt about their future the staff said that much more time is required to work with the latter group: *'You need to give much more attention to them, to make them eager. And for this aim you use all possible measures, talk to him, try to motivate by comparing how does it feel to be with and without a job... It just means more resources, time more preparation'*.

Client case studies

Client case studies are a good way of showing guidance processes in action. Based on counsellors' descriptions we present a series of specific cases below, and examine the outcomes of guidance and education processes. In all four cases, the objectives were successfully achieved. **The cases illustrate that guidance is a complex process into which clients enter with a range of predispositions, personal circumstances, levels of motivations, uncertainties and so on.**

Client 1: The client lived abroad for several years, but decided to create his future in Lithuania and came back. He decided to gain a new qualification and find a well-paid job. He came to the training centre to find out what kind of training programmes are offered, what is the duration of training and what are the fees.

- **Session 1:** The client was provided with information about training programmes, their duration and price. He got interested in welder training programmes (duration 11.5 weeks) and plumber training programmes (duration 29 weeks). He was unemployed and was not registered with the public employment service (PES). He was informed of the possibility to register at the PES and to participate in the PES project 'Discover yourself' which financially supports training for young people under 29. He was interested in this opportunity, decided to contact the PES for more information.
- **Session 2:** After a couple of days, he returned to the site, informed that he became a PES client, enrolled in the project 'Discover Yourself' and intends to claim for funding of the training. He was still interested in both the welder and plumber training. Together with counsellor he filled in the test on professions whose results showed he tends to think ahead and has a constructive thinking. He is capable to perform works that require attention to detail and manage processes. To help him make a firm decision about the future occupation, counsellor arranged a meeting with the teachers of plumbers and welders; these teachers told him about the training programmes, the employment opportunities, training workshops. Having obtained this information, he decided to study for a plumber's profession.
- **Session 3:** The client arrived to sign for a plumber training programme. Training was funded by the PES. He has completed training and is currently working successfully in a company that performs plumbing works.

Client 2: The client is 18, lives in rural area in a family of 8 children. He has graduated lower-secondary school. His two brothers have finished the decorator training programme in the site in the past. He came to the centre together with one of the brothers to consult about construction programmes. He was already registered in PES and, therefore, could claim for funding of training.

- **Session 1:** The client wanted to know about conditions of enrolment and learning. All information was provided and since he was interested only in construction programmes, training workshops were showed to him and all training programmes in construction area were presented. The client became interested in decorator and brick layer professions. At the end of the session he was advised to analyse training programmes and to search for more information about two programmes on the internet.
- **Session 2:** The client arrived to the site having made his mind about decorator training. He completed training and now works in a construction firm together with his brothers.

Client 3: a 30 year man, early school leaver.

- **Session 1:** The client studied in school in the evenings, had a family and wanted to find a job that would generate decent income. He was searching for job but being a perfectionist about learning and having serious attitude towards education results he could not combine school and work. He was also searching for his identity. He looked like artistic type of person, a dreamer, he was thinking that maybe he would like to do something with flowers. Together with counsellor he did a Holland interest assessment test, which confirmed that he is of artistic/realistic type. He was very satisfied that his inner feeling about floristry job was confirmed. At the end of the session he was given information about the possibilities of training and advised to search for more information in educational database AIKOS and contact training institutions.

The client did not return for other sessions.

Client 4: a young man with a lower-secondary level education attainment. He did not have a job. He was interested in getting a forklift operator qualification.

- **Session 1:** The client came to the site to know more about training of forklift operators. In the beginning he was sure about this job, because he heard from friends that it is a demanded and a well-paid job. He received all the information about training, training schedule, information about possibilities to receive funding for training, etc.
- **Session 2:** He returned the following week with a changed mind to start a training of plumber. Counsellor discussed why the opinion was changed and it appeared that the main reason was that the client has not succeeded in receiving a driver licence for several times, therefore, he was not anymore enthusiastic about the job of forklift operator. Information about plumber training and plumber occupation was given and after that a visit to plumbers

training workshop organised. He did not seem impressed about the prospect of working as a plumber and was given more information about training programme.

- **Session 3:** The client returned and signed up for decorator training programme. He has read all the information, talked to his family and changed his mind.

4.3 Key findings

Guidance activities and processes: quantitative findings

The most common reasons for guidance activities as indicated by clients were **exploring educational opportunities and assistance with job search**. This corresponds with the main focus of the session – discussing learning opportunities. Analysis of data by target group profile suggests that that guidance services should offer a **package of services** because different target groups come to guidance for different reasons.

In Lithuanian model the majority of clients received individual face-to-face consultations with a duration of sessions 31 minutes and longer.

The data collected about clients showed a dominant route to services: one third of clients were referred by **(un)employment service**, one third were referred by **educational institutions** / support services and a smaller part (26%) found out about services **individually**.

Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) typically was a part of the session but only a small share of service users recognised it as such. Moreover, a very small part of clients indicated VPL as one of the reasons for seeking guidance. This indicates that **VPL should be better integrated into the guidance sessions and that in general it needs better awareness raising among population**.

Guidance activities and processes: qualitative findings

Although each case is different and there is no standard duration, a guidance session can be roughly divided into the following **phases**: introduction, clarifying of personal objectives, mapping the client's current situation, identifying career or education perspectives, choosing learning and job possibilities, agreement on next steps taken by client. During follow-up sessions, clients informed about progress, obstacles encountered, performed additional tests needed and further discussed training opportunities.

According to programme staff the majority of clients needed more than 2-3 sessions. When comparing work with **motivated** clients who know what they want and those who are **in doubt** about their future the staff said that much more time was required to work with the latter group.

According to programme staff, the underlying philosophy of guidance services was to take into account each individual client, therefore, the sessions were dedicated to **better identifying clients' needs, skills and competences**. The methods and tools chosen depended on each client case. This implied that counsellors would be highly flexible and able to adapt to the clients' needs with strong interpersonal skills.

4.4 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Two clear issues emerge that have implications for programme development. The first relates to the **guidance offer** in Lithuania: if situation does not change in terms of policy attention and funding, the sites are not able to provide as many counselling sessions as needed. The staff had unanimous opinion that **one session is sufficient only for a minority of clients and usually two to three sessions is a must**. In Wave 1 the sites provided one session and in Wave 2 they provided two and more sessions; however, in practice it is not possible to guarantee this to every client in need because for counsellors counselling is not their main job.

The second implication relates to **transparency and independence** in the referral of clients to educational programmes. Although housing GOAL within educational institutions appears to be very effective in getting the target group to come to counselling sessions, the advice received and opportunities on offer may be influenced by the educational institution's (understandable) need to recruit students.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The GOAL service providers were adult education institutions themselves. However, adult education institutions' financial indicators rely on larger number of students, therefore, competition among education providers is great. In such a context it is difficult to guarantee **impartiality** in service provision because there is a high chance that clients will be referred mainly to learning opportunities within the education institution.

Implications for policy

GOAL experience showed that GOAL sessions were more than just informing about learning options and education institutions. GOAL clients in addition to **information services** also sought **support** in tackling with self-esteem and ambition. In addition, GOAL staff measured that for high-quality services more than one session is needed. This makes services quite expensive. Still the GOAL experience proved that it is beneficial to keep such **services in education institution** and to provide a targeted support to education institutions which are self-motivated and have staff to provide such services. For adult education institutions counselling services it will become increasingly important if they want to attract more students in the context of decreasing population.

GOAL experience showed that there is **no a one-fit-all counselling model** for all clients. Still it would be beneficial **to promote** successful practices, methods and tools and to take care that information where adults could receive guidance services would be disseminated and **accessible** to low-educated persons. The qualitative information collected showed that potential guidance clients and partners (i.e. potential referring institutions) are not aware that such services may be provided in educational institutions.

5 Partnerships and Networks

This chapter provides description and analysis of the partnerships and networks that have been developed to support the work of GOAL. This analysis includes an assessment of the strengths, achievements and challenges involved in developing and maintaining these partnerships and networks.

5.1 Developing partnerships and networks: programme aims

From the beginning of GOAL, adults' guidance system in Lithuania was evaluated as **fragmented** with several networks of guidance providers that interact with each other and with poor coordination at national level and among networks. Two sites chosen to experiment with GOAL services represented different education providers' networks although they both fell under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. With GOAL it was aimed to explore what were the existing **partnerships** of the sites and what partnerships proved to be successful or needed strengthening. It was also expected that broader networks of organisations would be developed.

It was assumed that because there is a lack of systemic **funding** and guidance initiatives are fragmented it is not enough for the sites to rely on themselves when strengthening and expanding their services. Partner organisations were often unaware of the guidance services and did not recognise the value it could add to their own. Therefore, there was a need to build a more structured cooperation with current and potential partners and at the same to improve the referral system or at least to propose the actions to the sites if they want to develop guidance services further.

5.2 Existence and scope of partnerships and networks

In Lithuania, the intervention sites had partnerships with various organisations and bodies before the GOAL programme that have existed for some time. Some cooperation (e.g. with employers and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange/ Public Employment Service) was quite intensive and regular; other partnerships (e.g. NGOs) could be characterised as fragmented and dependent on project-based funding. The financial indicators of the sites depend on the number of learners and thus the **main objectives of partnerships were related to referral and participation**: finding adult people who lack education or a profession and motivating them to get involved in adult education. The partnerships with the sites helped their partners to achieve their results: to help their target group get back into wider society, to get enrolled in education or training, to get a profession, to return to labour market and find a job. Although the intervention sites had quite good access to target groups, partners could provide bigger number of suitable clients for consultations.

Educational partners

Both sites had their networks of educational partners with whom they cooperated and exchanged practices on daily basis. The educational partners came from similar field (adult general education or vocational orientation). In the context of GOAL, VJLMTC had a more active partnership with educational partners. For VJLMTC contacts with educational partners was important because they

helped to widen training options for its clients (i.e. if clients are not oriented towards construction, metal industry – those industries where VJLMTC specialises in) and in some cases their clients need secondary education if they want to enrol into course for some qualification.

Both sites used national education information database AIKOS for search of information about education institutions and training programmes when they needed to refer their clients to other education institutions or to offer a relevant training programme.

During focus group the programme staff admitted to a lack of proactivity in finding new partners and referring institutions as well as lack of cooperation with other education institutions. This can be partly influenced the situation that guidance services are only one part of their everyday activities and the institutions get enough clients using their current partners and existing networks.

The two GOAL sites have also **developed a partnership with each other**: prior to the project these two education institutions did not cooperate. These organisations signed a cooperation agreement between themselves. The project has opened up possibilities for future networking.

Local policy partners

VAEC had established a partnership with Vilnius municipality local administrative branch of Zverynas district and spread information about GOAL service in the premises of the branch. Although this local partner lacked proactivity in informing about counselling services, a few clients found out about the GOAL from the partner. The programme coordinator and VAEC have tried to establish a closer contact with the municipal unit responsible for social issues as it was visited by low qualified adults and could be used for referring people to GOAL consultations. However, the partnership lacked sustainability because the unit had well-established contacts with public employment services which also offers guidance services.

Employment partners

Most of VJLMTC partners fell into this category. VJLMTC was actively cooperating with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange Vilnius branch (i.e. the public employment service, PES), Vilnius youth employment centre and private companies. The partnerships with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange Vilnius branch and Vilnius youth employment centre existed before the GOAL and have intensified during it. A part of GOAL service users found out about goal during VJLMTC weekly information sessions organised in Lithuanian Labour Exchange Vilnius branch. Partners – employers (private companies, e.g. JSC Arginta, JSC Lietpak) were referring their low qualified employees for counselling and training services to the site and the site provided them with personnel selection / recruitment services which covered the element of clients' guidance toward career.

VAEC regarded Lithuanian Labour Exchange Vilnius branch as a GOAL partner.

NGOs

VAEC has established a partnership with Zverynas community centre and spread information about GOAL service in the premises of the branch. Although this local partner lacked proactivity in informing about counselling services, a few clients found out about the GOAL from the partner.

GOAL programme national coordinator organised meetings with NGO SOPA working with disabled people, the Society for Prisoners' Support, the Women's Issues Information Centre, Vilnius Crises Centre to present possibilities for career counselling and opportunities to cooperate. These institutions shared information about GOAL service with their clients / visitors. Institutions were quite open for suggestions to cooperate, however, in reality they were not so active in practical work and cooperation. Three clients of VAEC indicated that they were referred to GOAL service by NGO.

5.3 Developing and sustaining partnerships and networks: programme challenges and barriers

The GOAL programme was mainly built on existing partnerships of the sites. The main challenge of the programme was establishing **new sustainable partnerships** where partners would not limit their cooperation to information dissemination but also would take an active part in referring their clients to the sites. In general, new partners (e.g. NGOs, employers, municipal branch) were quite open for suggestions to cooperate, however, they were not so active in practical work and cooperation. The least successful were the trials to establish partnership with municipal welfare services. Local policy actors did not see the actual benefit of referring their clients to GOAL services since they were already in close contacts with guidance services of PES.

The main reason for this was that the sites and GOAL programme in general **could offer counselling sessions to a limited number of clients** and no other real and tangible motivation for partners to be active in the project could be offered. Some new partners (NGOs) did refer their clients to GOAL services whereas others took a more passive approach and just posted information about GOAL on their message boards.

The programme staff and programme partners indicated the limited funding and lack of joint interests as barriers to the sustainability of partnerships. **Cooperation requires time and energy:** when no clear results and outcomes for both sides from partnership are present, often partnership becomes formal, with limited concrete actions and tangible outcomes. Focus groups and interviews with partners showed that it should be clearly indicated how every institution can benefit from cooperation, how it can contribute in more effective way, and time and discussions should be allocated for that. Due to the fact that guidance is not a primary task for the sites, a preoccupation with other major activities was indicated as a possible threat to sustainability of partnership.

In interviews, policy actors shared their opinion about partnerships in general and not only within GOAL. They saw **a need to improve the quality of partnerships in adult guidance and counselling** and underlined that the overall adult guidance system is too fragmented and that separate parts of it fall under different governing structures. For example, employment offices are under the

responsibility of Ministry for Social Security and Labour, educational institutions under the responsibility of Ministry of Education and Science, municipal welfare offices belong to municipal level and all the aforementioned institutions do not always cooperate with NGOs. One policy actor expressed the opinion that the Lithuanian character was rather **individualistic** and that many educational institutions were operating in isolation and sometimes they do not feel a need for partnerships. Another policy actor pointed out that there is **a need to establish a central focal institution in adult education** that would foresee national and regional challenges and would have good networks with regions. As one policy actor pointed *'There are good initiatives by Public Employment Services, but they are in their system, non-formal or formal adult education schools function in their system, NGOs and adult education coordinators function on their own. The system is very fragmented. We don't know about each others' practices and tools'*.

To motivate partnerships GOAL coordinator visited partner institutions and encouraged the sites to be more active in promoting GOAL. Information campaigns were organised and information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions and in the sites. In reality, because the sites had already well-established partnerships and because they had self-referred clients, counsellors also lacked proactivity in communicating with partners and motivating them.

5.4 Strengths and achievements

Many of GOAL partnerships with referring institutions existed already before the GOAL programme and the GOAL helped to strengthen them because it offered tangible counselling services. For example, VJLMTC stressed that their **partnership covered all stages of the counselling process**: referral to guidance services, guidance service provision (services were shaped by the needs of the partners, for example, the match between job vacancies and clients) and employment. Cooperation with VJLMTC was appreciated by their partners from public employment centre, youth labour centre and employers. Public employment centre valued the opportunity to not only to refer their clients for counselling or presenting future jobs and learning opportunities, but also the possibility for their counsellors to consult VJLMTC professionals about specifics of occupations and training programmes that VJLMTC offered.

In the run of GOAL existing partnerships have strengthened and new partnerships were established. For example, a partner institution that joined GOAL in Wave 2 confirmed to be *'fully satisfied with cooperation'* and said that they observed the work of the site during presentation of job opportunities for job-seekers and later decided to delegate VJLMTC a task to present their institution. Now they fully trust VJLMTC and do not send their representatives to such meetings. According to a partner, they tried to search for employees personally but were not successful even in reaching them and thus wasted a great deal of time and energy.

VAEC have established new partnerships with NGOs (the Society for Prisoners' Support, the Women's Issues Information Centre, Vilnius Crises Centre) and it is likely the partnerships will continue in the future.

One of the apparent gains from GOAL is that the partnership between the VET institution and adult education centre developed and, importantly, both see the way for more intense cooperation in the future.

We believe that participation in GOAL did prove to the sites the importance of having good and settled contacts with referring institutions if they want to keep new clients coming. Programme sites and partners were willing to keep the existing partnership because of the direct benefits they receive from it: counselling and training of unemployed people, future staff, second-chance education opportunities for early school leavers, etc. According to policy actors and programme partners the following factors as influencing the quality of collaboration/ partnerships: **clear goals of partnership, clear objectives and roles of partners, shared interests of all parties, willingness to cooperate and sufficient funding.**

5.5 Key findings

Developing partnerships and networks: programme aims

From the beginning of GOAL, adults guidance system in Lithuania was evaluated as fragmented with several networks of guidance providers that interact with each other and with poor coordination at national level and among networks. With GOAL it was aimed to explore what were the existing partnerships of the sites and what partnerships proved to be successful or needed strengthening. It was also expected that broader networks of organisations would be developed.

Existence and scope of partnerships and networks

The intervention sites had partnerships with various organisations and bodies before the GOAL programme that have existed for some time. Some cooperation (e.g. with employers and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange/ Public Employment Service) was quite intensive and regular; other partnerships (e.g. NGOs) could be characterised as fragmented and dependent on project-based funding. The partnerships came from diverse fields (education, employment, NGOs) with local level organisations least represented. The strongest partnerships seem to be those with employment area organisations (Public employment services, Vilnius youth labour centre, employers).

Challenges and barriers

The GOAL programme was mainly built on existing partnerships of the sites. The main challenge of the programme was establishing new sustainable partnerships. In general, new partners (e.g. NGOs, employers, municipal branch) were quite open for suggestions to cooperate, however, practically they were not so active in practical work and cooperation. The least successful were the trials to establish partnership with municipal welfare services. Local policy actors did not see the actual benefit of referring their clients to GOAL services since they were already in close contacts with guidance services of PES.

The main reason for this is that the sites and GOAL programme in general could offer counselling sessions to limited number of clients and no other real and tangible motivation for partners to be active in the project could be offered.

Strengths and achievements

In the run of GOAL existing **partnerships have strengthened** and new partnerships were established. For example, a partner institution that joined GOAL in Wave 2 confirmed to be *'fully satisfied with cooperation'*. Participation in GOAL did prove to the sites the importance of having good and settled contacts with referring institutions if they want to keep new clients coming. Programme sites and partners were willing to keep the existing partnership because of the direct benefits they received from it: counselling and training of unemployed people, future staff, second-chance education opportunities for early school leavers, etc. One of the gains of GOAL is that the partnership between the VET institution and adult education centre developed and, importantly, both see the way for more intense cooperation in the future.

5.6 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

The following factors influence the quality of collaboration/ partnerships: clear goals of partnership, clear objectives and roles of partners, shared interests of all parties, willingness to cooperate, and the availability of funding. In order to build and sustain effective partnerships, the benefits of cooperation must be clear to all partners. Failure to do so represents a serious challenge to future programme development, as guidance is only one of several competing interests that potential partners share.

The research also emphasised that the sustainability of partnerships is dependent on financial mechanisms being in place to support these partnerships. The Lithuanian GOAL project builds on existing partnerships, which should mean these partnerships are sustainable beyond the life of the programme, but there may be an impact on the quality of the partnerships. Future programme development will have to consider carefully how sustainable partnerships can be built especially with local policy level organisations and NGOs, give the importance of partnerships and networks to each stage of the guidance process.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The challenge of establishing sustaining partnerships is partly due to non-existence of national / municipal financial and non-financial schemes to support guidance services. The only exception is counselling of unemployed implemented by PES. Guidance services to other groups are implemented on the basis of projects and depend on interest of organisations delivering the services. With no regular funding they are not motivated to expand services and related partnerships.

Implications for policy

Policy actors, programme staff and partners acknowledged the role partnerships play in delivering effective guidance and admitted that the current system is rather fragmented, with underdeveloped mutual links and exchange of information. This is caused (at least in part) by the competition amongst education institutions for students; because of this competition, **counselling appears to have a strong focus on attracting potential learners to particular education institutions. Counselling thus runs the risk of being institution-centred rather than client-centred.**

Because of their competition for learners, there is a threat that educational institutions prefer to act in isolation and do not see the potential of partnership. **A possible solution would be establishment of central focal institution in adult education that would foresee national and regional challenges and would have good networks with regions.**

The role of NGOs in guidance services delivery should be explored in more detail. NGOs work is based on another principles than state-owned and municipal institutions. NGOs work with population groups at social risk, they have a good reputation in local communities. It is very likely that investment into the services provided by NGOs would be more cost-efficient than funding regular VET or adult education institutions who don't have a good access to low-skilled and low-motivated adults.

6 Counsellor competences

This chapter focuses on guidance counsellors, first providing an overview of counselling activities and the competences required to meet the needs of the GOAL target groups. The chapter also focuses on challenges to high quality counselling, and how those challenges may be overcome.

6.1 The job of the counsellor

Background

Since in the GOAL project Lithuania did not deal with counsellor competences as an intervention strategy, no special targeted activities (e.g. training) were offered to staff. Nevertheless, staff competence development issues were tackled during qualitative data collection. From interviews with clients and staff it was apparent that, taking into account the very limited funding available for the provision of guidance staff at both sites, the staff are professional, experienced and hard-working.

There is **no national competence standard for adult guidance counsellors in Lithuania**. The national employment office (Lithuanian Labour Exchange) has adopted a competence profile for counsellors working in local employment offices, but this applies only to the network of employment offices. Policy actors expressed the opinion that there should be a national level document that would describe the competences that are required, as in the absence of such a document, counsellors' competences and guidance quality differs from site to site and depends on the attitude of the institution. Such a standard could be used for self-assessment, planning of in-service training and for designing training programmes. This is seen as a step towards setting common standards for quality and competences of guidance specialists. At the moment there is no such occupation as an adult guidance specialist, no job profile and no targeted funding for these specialists. This reflects an attitude of policymakers towards adults' guidance.

No specific country-wide support measures for counsellors are currently available. Until 2015 there was a project for guidance in the general education system during which specialist training was organised and guidance materials were prepared. The tools from the project can be adapted for work with adults. The project also funded the work of guidance counsellors and, for example, VAEC gained its expertise in large degree thanks to this project. Funding for counsellors also meant a motivation to provide guidance services because there was no other funding to deliver these services. Now the project has finished, however, there are no systemic initiatives planned until new ESF projects start (planned in 2018).

Programme staff experience, education and training prior to GOAL

GOAL counselling services were provided by four counsellors, two at each site. During the GOAL programme one counsellor was replaced in VJLMTC in Wave 2. All four counsellors had a tertiary education level qualification, corresponding to Masters level. Two of the four counsellors had a qualification in psychology (one of them has left in Wave 1), one graduated in ethics and geography,

and two in public administration (a second has joined GOAL in Wave 2). Their experience of providing adult guidance varied from five to 20 years.

Counselling activities

For all four counsellors, **their main job role was something other than counselling** (manager of unit, training manager, employee recruitment manager, teacher). For all counsellors, only a small share of their working time was spent on guidance (8%, 9%, 10%, and 50% respectively). Of that guidance time, during GOAL programme, three counsellors were working only on GOAL services, one counsellor spent 50% of guidance time on GOAL and the other spent half her guidance time on services for other groups. **Programme staff did not receive additional support from other staff.** An example of a week in life of the counsellors of VJLMTC is provided in the box 6.1.

Box 6.1. *A week in life of the VJLMTC counsellors*

Monday	07:30	Review of CVs of candidates to fill vacancies
	09:00	
	10:00	Interviews with candidates to fill vacancies
	11:00	
	11:30	
	12:00	Administrative activities
	13:00	
	14:00	Interviews with candidates to fill vacancies
15:00		
16:00	Administrative activities	
Tuesday	07:30	Administrative activities
	09:00	
	10:00	Preparation of job contracts
	11:00	Career counselling
	12:00	
	13:00	
	14:00	
	15:00	
16:00		
Wednesday	07:30	Team meeting
	09:00	
	10:00	Participation in PES project 'Discover yourself'
	11:00	
	12:00	
	13:00	
	14:00	Career counselling
	15:00	
16:00		

Thursday	08:00	Interviews with candidates to fill vacancies
	09:00	
	10:00	Preparation of job contracts
	11:00	
	12:00	Career counselling
	13:00	
	14:00	
	15:00	Administrative activities
16:00		
Friday	08:00	Participation in PES project ,Discover yourself'
	09:00	
	10:00	
	11:00	
	12:00	
	13:00	Administrative activities
	14:00	Planning of next week
	15:00	

The example illustrates a diversity of tasks that GOAL counsellors performed. According to it, the counsellors planned the week so that counselling of clients would be organised in three days, leaving Monday and Friday for administrative tasks, planning and dealing with requests from PES. It should be noted that in VJLMTC counsellors were engaged not only in face-to-face counselling. Since the GOAL service was located in a training institution, counselling sessions also included visiting workshops where clients could try out several different professions, e.g. working with simulators of cranes and welding devices, or trying bricklaying, wall decorating, etc.

Counsellors' work in VAEC was organised similarly: counsellors worked primarily as teachers and managers of units (a career centre and non-formal education, monitoring and support unit) and had lessons in the morning and in the afternoon and meetings with clients were usually arranged during lunch-time or according to individually agreed schedule with client. One of VAEC counsellors was working as a part-time psychologist. According to assessment of VAEC, usually on average they can dedicated 2,5 hours per week for counselling.

When asked about work volume needed for high-quality counselling a member of staff confided that after three sessions in one day she feels 'squeezed out'. During a focus group, programme staff underlined that there are different periods in their work. *'There are certain days, maybe weeks, when you search for clients, visit public employment service, or search in the internet, post announcements'*.

Defining competences

For discussing the competences of counsellors, a **General Competence profile for Educational Guidance & Counselling to low educated adults** produced within GOAL was used (Box 6.2).

Box 6.2. General Competence profile for Educational Guidance & Counselling to low educated adults

<p>Knowledge (knowledge on different domains related to guidance to low educated adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General knowledge of the education sector and profound knowledge on formal and non-formal adult education - Knowledge about transitions in education system, transition from education to work and from work to LLL - Knowledge of guidance theory, approaches and methods - Knowledge on tools - Knowledge about the target groups - Basic knowledge on learning disabilities and psychological disorders (e.g. depression, ADHD, ADD, Burn-out, autism, dyslexia) - Knowledge on procedures for validation of prior learning, recognition of competences & degrees - Knowledge on the rights and the duties of the client - Knowledge on relevant services and institutions in the field of employment, education, social welfare, integration, psycho-socials services - Familiarity with information on educational, training employment trends and forecasts, employers' needs, labour market and social issues - Knowledge of networking, partnership building - Knowledge on monitoring, evaluation and quality system - Knowledge of administrative tools and registration systems
<p>Guidance skills (applying guidance methods and techniques, skills that are necessary to provide quality guidance to low educated adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying guidance techniques, methods and tools - Applying interview techniques - Identifying and analysing questions and needs of the client - Identifying values, competences and interests of the client - Coaching the client in taking initiatives, steps and decisions - Applying techniques to motivate the clients - Developing a portfolio and personal action plans with the clients - Analysing eventual risks and disadvantages during guidance process - Identifying and analysing barriers to achieve the expected results and supporting client in overcoming these barriers - Assessing the challenges and situation of the individual in a social context and take this into account in the guidance process - Encouraging and supporting the client to involve his/her personal network - Following up the actions of the clients, providing feedback to referring organisations if necessary - Referring the clients to relevant courses, experts, information sources - Familiarity with core concepts and theories in psychology

<p>Communication Skills</p>	<p>To clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply adequate communication methods in interviews with clients - Overcome language barriers (both foreign as native), being able to adapt linguistic usage to the client - Being able to motivate clients to overcome barriers and undertake action - Being able to deal with diversities of target groups (cultural, disabilities, special needs) - Skills on talking about sensitive subjects (like low literacy) - Being client-oriented - Listening actively - Dealing with conflict situations - Showing the right balance between personal involvement and keeping a professional distance in the guidance process. - Respecting the line between educational guidance and social work - Creating a safe and confidential environment - Skills for promotion and marketing of guidance <p>Networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying networking skills: appropriate communication with external organisations to develop and maintain networks - Showing integrity and respect in communication about the clients with third parties <p>Colleagues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicating effectively with colleagues - Being open and helpful to colleagues
<p>(Inter)personal competences and attitudes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being able to establish trust & security - Reflecting on own skills; Being aware of the own capacity and limitations - Engaging in personal development: learning from colleagues, self-reflection, self-study, relevant courses and training - Showing empathy - Being open to cultural diversity, being aware and respectful for clients' cultural differences and values - Showing professional attitudes: respecting standards, ethical responsibility and quality - Analysing and assessing own communication and the effects of own attitudes and values - Using time effectively - Being flexible

When discussing the competence profile the counsellors complemented it with knowledge on labour market trends/ forecasts and employers' needs, knowledge on psychology and managing of conflict situations skills.

During interviews programme staff underlined guidance/ coaching and psychological counselling skills, and knowledge of guidance methods and tools, as the most important competences. They also stressed the importance of knowledge of labour market situation, labour market forecasts, about training programmes and their offer and admitted that as guidance specialists they lack systemised information and profound understanding. *'It is very important to give a clear and concrete information about training options available, not only to change attitudes of client'*. *'Very often we look for information together with clients, but I don't have complexes to show that I lack this knowledge'*. It is also important that counsellors would have a support from other colleagues, e.g. vocational teachers, instructors available in case they need to explain particular occupation-related peculiarities. From a professional work point of view, they identified that the competences that need to be strengthened are self-reflection and learning to learn. This is due to the fact that **there is no systemic training for adult guidance specialists and their professional development depends very much on personal initiative**.

The programme was aimed at analysing what is the educational background of counsellors, what competences are considered to be the most important by counsellors and what are the challenges faced in developing their competences. Information was gathered during meetings in the sites and focus groups of GOAL staff. The client satisfaction survey and follow-up survey gave an opportunity to collect clients' evaluations of counsellors' competences. Finally, participation in GOAL offered counsellors opportunities to build their capacity by using new guidance tools, expanding number of sessions, reflecting on their practices and networking among the sites.

6.2 Achieving high standards of counsellor competence

Service user perceptions

In general service users positively assessed the outcomes of the guidance sessions (see Tables 9.1-9.6) with **the absolute majority (94%) of clients being satisfied with their contact with counsellor** (data from clients satisfaction survey, Table 10.1). **59% clients claimed that they will follow up on the advice given by the counsellor (40% - maybe will follow)**. Moreover, only two of 31 clients in **follow-up survey** did not agree that counselling helped them to be more confident about achieving their educational/learning/training or employment/career/job goals (see section 9.2 for more information about follow-up survey results). Twenty-eight of 31 clients claimed that it was easy to understand the information provided during counselling. And many clients when asked about benefits of counselling remembered counselling sessions as interesting / pleasant.

Clients during interviews were very positive about the outcomes of guidance and did not report any shortcomings or proposals for improvement. During interviews with clients, personal contact with counsellor and their professionalism were distinguished as strengths of the service.

Staff and other stakeholders' perspectives

According to staff, a professional relationship with a good distribution of roles is a key to achieving good quality counselling. Although clients often are low-qualified it is possible to establish and agree on rules of communication. Another important aspect was underlined that a client has to make decision himself. *'Although clients sometimes ask for advice what to do and say 'I will do as you say', it is necessary to make a client understand that he is responsible for choosing a job or learning. 'I underline to client that it will be his choice, not mine'.* One counsellor reflected that she always asks a person to explain his decision or choice not to make him change his mind but to better understand the motives behind.

When generalising the changes in quality of Wave 1 and Wave 2 the programme staff admitted that because of increased number sessions the sessions became significantly more effective. *'Because of gaining more experience in communicating with clients, getting better insights of what is needed and how to make a turn the conversation, which tools to use. We broadened and deepened our service and are able to deal with a more wide spectrum of problems'.* When asked to have a critical look at their experience with GOAL one counsellor admitted that she felt she did not reveal and use full personal and GOAL potential and GOAL methodologies because of lack of time for sessions and facing the lack of motivation from clients to attend more guidance sessions.

When reflecting about the challenges they faced, programme staff noted that fragmentation of national counselling system did not help counsellors in education institutions. They admitted that education institutions' services are not part of the overall system and counselling services very often are project-based. Therefore, they felt that there was a lack of continuity and episodic participation. Another problem mentioned that counsellors in GOAL were not formally educated for this profession. An observation was made that due to a lack of system there were no requirements for accountability regarding the counselling services (e.g. no clear indicators or goals set), counselling activities were not funded as such. All these factors contribute that counsellors, especially in VAEC, did not feel really motivated, except for their good will, to get engaged into counselling tasks, because their main activities were other. VJLMTC was in another situation because they had tight partnership with PES services and were used to counselling job seekers/ unemployed.

Summary of strengths and achievements

It should be noted that no specific country-wide support measures for counsellors are currently available and there is no national competence standard for adult guidance counsellors in Lithuania. Nevertheless, opportunities for professional development of counsellors are available and counsellors in their work can adjust various guidance tools developed during ESF or other projects. Until 2015 there was a project for guidance in the general education system, which funded the work of guidance counsellors and, for example, VAEC gained its expertise in large degree thanks to this project.

Although the staff did not have formal qualifications in guidance and counselling, all staff was experienced in providing counselling services to adults with experience ranging from five to 20 years. In addition, they appreciated that one member of staff in each site had a qualification in psychology.

Since in the GOAL project Lithuania did not deal with counsellor competences as an intervention strategy, no special targeted activities (e.g. training) were offered to staff. Nevertheless, the staff acknowledged that participation in GOAL increased their expertise because their services were expanded and new guidance tools were offered.

6.3 Challenges and barriers

Due to absence of coordination of guidance services there is **no clear understanding or guidance regarding where responsibility lies for developing measures, such as competence profiles, that would enhance the quality of adult guidance services**. Offer of training courses for guidance specialists is underdeveloped. The staff to perform high-quality counselling services would need complex skills (guidance related skills, communication skills, (Inter)personal competences and attitudes) as well as profound knowledge on education, labour market and other different domains related to guidance to low educated adults. There is no systemic training for adult guidance specialists and their professional development depends very much on personal initiative. They need to search for training courses that would ideally be free of charge.

When offering GOAL services the staff did not face particular challenges or barriers in regard to their competence. All staff were experienced and their work was highly evaluated by clients. One major obstacle to counsellor's professional competency is the multiple roles they have to play in their job, including administrative tasks and teaching. Therefore, they do not regard themselves as counsellors (i.e. professional identity issue) and can not dedicate themselves fully to counselling activities (i.e. quality of work and self-realisation issues).

6.4 Key findings

Background and aims

There is **no national competence standard for adult guidance counsellors in Lithuania** and no specific country-wide support measures for counsellors are currently available. Until 2015 there was a project for guidance in the general education system during which specialist training was organised and guidance materials were prepared. The tools from the project can be adapted for work with adults. The project also funded the work of guidance counsellors and, for example, VAEC gained its expertise in large degree thanks to this project. There is a competence profile for counsellors working in local employment offices adopted by a national employment office (Lithuanian Labour Exchange), but this applies only to the network of employment offices

Counselling activities

For all GOAL counsellors, their main job role was something other than counselling. Only a small share of their working time was spent on guidance (from eight to 50%). They had to combine counselling activities with teaching, administrative task, job interviews. Programme staff did not receive additional support from other staff.

Defining competences

For discussing the competences of counsellors, a General Competence profile for Educational Guidance & Counselling to low educated adults produced within GOAL was used. The counsellors complemented it with knowledge on labour market trends/ forecasts and employers' needs, knowledge on psychology and managing of conflict situations skills. During interviews programme staff underlined guidance and psychological counselling skills, and knowledge of guidance methods and tools, as the most important competences. They also stressed the importance of knowledge of labour market situation, labour market forecasts, about training programmes and their offer and admitted that as guidance specialists they lacked systemised information and profound understanding. Self-reflection and learning to learn were identified that the competences that need to be strengthened.

Achieving high standards of counselling competence

The clients very positively assessed the work of counsellor with the absolute majority (94%) of clients being satisfied with their contact with counsellor. Only two of 31 clients in follow-up survey did not agree that counselling helped them to be more confident about achieving their goals. No obvious areas for improvements in terms of work or competences of counsellors were detected from data monitoring or interviews with clients. According to staff, a professional relationship with a good distribution of roles is a key to achieving good quality counselling. When comparing Wave 1 and Wave 2 the staff felt more effective because of increased number sessions.

Challenges and barriers

The main challenge in terms of staff competence development is underdeveloped offer of training courses. There is no systemic training for adult guidance specialists and their professional development depends very much on personal initiative. The data from programme staff reveal that staff spend a very small proportion of their time on guidance for adults learners because this is not the main function of their job. Staff feel that this is a weakness of service. Since there is no special funding available for adult guidance, it is up to each institution's management to prioritise this area and dedicate resources to it.

6.5 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Consideration needs to be given to how the quality of future programmes can be maintained or strengthened if the opportunities for staff training and development are very limited and lacking in institutional support.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

In Lithuania, fragmentation in the adult education sector appears to manifest itself in a number of ways relevant to GOAL. In particular, there is **no clear understanding or guidance regarding where the responsibility lies for developing measures, such as competence profiles, that would enhance the quality of adult guidance services.**

Implications for policy

A general consensus by staff and policy makers was that it would be beneficial to have a common counsellor competence standard that would be agreed on national level. This was seen as a step towards setting common standards for quality and competences of guidance specialists. At the moment adult guidance specialists come from wide range of educational backgrounds what suggests a need for staff development strategies and actions to guarantee that counsellors acquire or improve specific competences needed for counselling this diverse target group.

7 Guidance tools for low educated adults

This chapter discusses the tools which counsellors on the GOAL programme in Lithuania use in their GOAL guidance programmes, offering analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these tools in terms of impact and quality, as well as the challenges associated with tool development and/or use. The range of tools that support staff and clients in adult guidance is broad and can include:

- Traditional, paper-based resources and newer online and digital tools.
- Tools to diagnose and assess levels of skills, including basic skills.
- Tools to support the validation of prior learning (VPL) processes.
- Tools for evaluation and self-evaluation (such as interest inventories, tools for making action plans, goal-setting pro forma).
- Tools that help counsellors to reflect; professional development tools for counsellors.
- Information tools (internal and external sources), including both those which inform the counsellor and those which can be used to disseminate information to clients (such as job-search tools, college websites).
- Data monitoring tools and registrations systems, where analysis of the variables can be used to develop the programme and track outcomes.
- Tools that help to structure the guidance session such as scripts for interview. Data monitoring templates can also support this aspect of the counselling.
- Tools that help clients with job-search, such as tools to assist with CV writing.

From this range, GOAL programmes sought to develop a toolbox of resources that could support guidance services for low-educated adults.

7.1 Context and aims

GOAL programme counsellors before the GOAL had access to a number of publicly available guidance tools that were designed during ESF or other support-programmes projects. The examples of such on-line tools may be found on Euroguidance website: <http://www.euroguidance.lt> and include tests aimed to assist in choosing occupation according to interests and personal characteristics, various tests/ questionnaires about career management competences, personality tests and others. The majority of these counselling tools were designed primarily for school age students and their adjustment and adaptation for the work with adults took time.

Both GOAL sites in Lithuania were used to working mostly with low qualified or low educated adults, therefore, they had a pre-selection of tools adequate and suitable for this target group. In both sites data monitoring tools and registrations systems were not used systemically.

The GOAL programme aimed to find the most suitable ways and tools to provide counselling services to early school leavers and low-skilled based on analysis of experience. The request from the sites

was to offer **simple and understandable for target group** tools, which would be easy to introduce in practice and would remain in use after the project.

The counsellors during focus group stressed that it would be beneficial to have tailor made tools for specific target groups: *'a compilation of methodologies and tools for non-motivated adults, for motivated clients, for young clients'* so as the counsellor would not need to *'wander and analyse these methodologies, what leads to a trial and error approach'*. In addition, a need for tools that would allow analysing psychological structure of clients was stressed because this has an important influence on a client's career.

7.2 Guidance tools for low educated adults

Tool selection, development and use

Taking into account findings from SWOT analysis and the needs expressed by the sites, the following tools were developed or improved:

- a form of semi-structured interview;
- tools for mapping competences and interests to use according to needs of clients;
- structure and framework for a Career Plan was developed specially for VAEC;
- written information about CV and motivation letter writing to be used for sharing with clients.

In general, the selection of tools did not differ substantially in the sites. The sites have used these tools mostly depended on individual client, his or her motivation to go deeper into process or just to get some brief information. This raises the importance of the counsellor's professional expertise in judging which tools will work best with that individual client. In addition to tools offered by GOAL, the counsellors during sessions used other available tools (tests for choosing occupation, e.g. Holland test, 'mosaic of professions', tests/ questionnaires about career management competences, personality tests and others) or recommended their clients to do these tests at home.

According to staff, the most useful tool was **semi-structured interview guide** as it helped to establish a good and close working relationship between the consultant and client. A proposed interview structure consisted of the following sections:

- demographic data
- information about education, vocational training and work experience
- interests, needs and future vision
- occupation-specific training experience, career planning and job-search experience.

For each section questions, mainly open, were proposed.

Counsellors also welcomed **questionnaires for mapping competences and interests** adjusted to adult learners (e.g. the Klimov's differential diagnostic questionnaire, a questionnaire for the analysis

of personal communication and organisational skills, and a questionnaire to better understand job preferences).

During Wave 2 VAEC has helped several clients to design their **career plan** using a career plan development guidelines developed as part of GOAL. The guidelines proved to be well prepared and the site intends to use them in the future.

During focus group the staff admitted that compared to Wave 1 in Wave 2 they felt better prepared for counselling in terms of guidance tools.

Interviews and follow-up survey revealed that for clients it was challenging to specify tools/activities used in the counselling that they found particularly useful. The majority of clients contacted for follow-up survey (18 of 31) indicated paper-based tools as particularly useful. They also recalled using internet sites (12 clients), brochures (11). Other options (exercises, online tools, emails, SMS, Facebook, WhatsApp) seemed to have been rarely used or not used at all. Interestingly enough, interest tests were mentioned only by one client in follow-up survey, but it is possible that other clients did not distinguish them from paper-based tools. Preference of paper-based tools over internet tools was confirmed by a GOAL client in interview who claimed that paper-based tools were more appropriate and helped him to better concentrate.

Finally, the sites found it useful to integrate parts of **GOAL data monitoring instrument and client satisfaction survey** questionnaire into their practices. According to counsellors, questions from monitoring data instrument (e.g. questions about client's goals, expectations and barriers, exit data) are given to after-GOAL clients and questions from clients satisfaction survey fed into a compilation of questions which are asked when collecting feedback from training and guidance services users.

Strengths and achievements

Both GOAL sites in Lithuania before the start of GOAL were used to working mostly with low qualified or low educated adults, therefore, they had a pre-selection of tools adequate and suitable for this target group. The GOAL programme offered them additional tools adjusted to the particular target group: a form of semi-structured interview, tools for mapping competences and interests to use according to needs of clients, structure and framework for a Career, written information about CV and motivation letter writing. These tools were meant for working with target group in general and after piloting and introducing them the staff noted that still it would be beneficial to have tailor made tools for specific target groups: young early school leavers, non-motivated clients and motivated clients. In addition, a need for tools that would support analysing psychological structure of clients was stressed because many clients felt the need to better explore their identity and tackle such internal issues as self-confidence, self-esteem, and counsellors had to be prepared to deal with clients' imperfections, failures and rejection of counselling support.

A semi-structured interview was evaluated by counsellors as a very useful for work with the target group. It helped to establish good contact with clients, and to gather and provide information needed to map future actions for clients. Also tests for evaluation of interests or capacities were

used. These were useful as a great deal of information could be gathered in a short and simple way. Clients seemed to feel more positive on paper based tools, because they needed time to reflect and concentrate. As clients stated that they were satisfied with a service provided, the conclusion can be drawn that the tools used were adequate and tailored to target groups.

Before the GOAL the sites did not have systemic guidance services clients monitoring systems, neither they collected feedback about services quality. As a result of collecting GOAL clients monitoring and satisfaction data, the sites found it useful to integrate parts of GOAL data monitoring instrument and client satisfaction survey questionnaire into their practices. A part of questions regarding clients' satisfaction was integrated to VJLMTC clients' data collection and the site is determined to collect feedback from guidance services clients (previous to GOAL only feedback from learners was collected).

7.3 Challenges and barriers

No major problems occurred in use of tools. The counsellors were instructed about the tools and did not face substantial barriers in applying them. Clients seemed satisfied with paper based tools that covered their personal characteristics and occupational interests. The clients during interviews and follow-up survey seemed not capable of reflecting about the tools they used and it may be recommended for counsellors to work on presentation of the tests and to better reveal the objectives of completing them.

Staff after GOAL sessions expressed their needs to further specialise tools according to target group, but this request is beyond the GOAL.

7.4 Key findings

Context and aims

GOAL programme counsellors before the GOAL had access to a number of publicly available guidance tools that were designed during ESF or other support-programmes projects. The majority of these counselling tools were designed primarily for school age students and their adjustment and adaptation for the work with adults took time.

Both GOAL sites in Lithuania were used to working mostly with low qualified or low educated adults, therefore, they had a pre-selection of tools adequate and suitable for this target group. In both sites data monitoring tools and registrations systems were not used systemically.

The GOAL programme aimed to find the most suitable ways and tools to provide counselling services to early school leavers and low-skilled based on analysis of experience.

Tool selection, development and use

Taking into account findings from SWOT analysis and the needs expressed by the sites, the following tools were developed or improved: a form of semi-structured interview, tools for mapping competences and interests to use according to needs of clients, structure and framework for a Career Plan, written information about CV and motivation letter writing to be used for sharing with clients.

The sites have used these tools mostly depended on individual client, his or her motivation to go deeper into process or just to get some brief information.

Interviews and follow-up survey revealed that for clients it was challenging to specify tools/activities used in the counselling that they found particularly useful. The majority of clients contacted for follow-up survey (18 of 31) indicated paper-based tools as particularly useful. They also recalled using internet sites (12 clients), brochures (11).

Strengths and achievements

According to staff, the most useful tool was semi-structured interview guide as it helped to establish a good and close working relationship between the consultant and client. Counsellors also welcomed questionnaires for mapping competences and interests adjusted to adult learners. Finally, the sites found it useful to integrate parts of GOAL data monitoring instrument and client satisfaction survey questionnaire into their practices.

Challenges and barriers

No major problems occurred in use of tools. The counsellors were instructed about the tools and did not face substantial barriers in applying them. Staff after GOAL sessions expressed their needs to further specialise tools according to target group, but this request is beyond the GOAL.

7.5 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

GOAL experience in Lithuania suggests that counsellors need a several compilations of different tools, from which they can select those that best suit the individual client's needs and goals. Counsellors expressed their need for specialised compilations by target groups (motivated / non-motivated clients, young clients who dropped out of school). This raises a need for mapping of existing tools on the national level and making them available for professionals. Current compilations of tools (e.g. published on Euroguidance platform) are targeted for school-age students. A similar platform could be established or supplemented for professionals working with adults.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

Programme partners from PES system revealed that new methodologies and tools for individual and group counselling of low-motivated job seekers was developed and introduced from 2017. It would be beneficial that counsellors working outside the PES system would have access at least partially to these tools.

Implications for policy

In Lithuania, fragmentation in the adult education sector appears to manifest itself in a number of ways relevant to GOAL. Similarly, to counsellors' competence profiles and continuing professional development, there is **no clear understanding or guidance regarding where responsibility lies for developing, mapping and disseminating guidance tools for adults.**

8 Outreach

Lithuania did not have outreach as a GOAL intervention strategy. Nevertheless outreach activities have taken place, and this chapter provides an analysis of these including a description of the challenges involved and preliminary analysis of achievements.

By 'outreach' the GOAL project refers to strategies for bringing the guidance programmes to the target group, for example, by setting up drop-in services in locations that are easier for marginalised clients to access, and strategies for bringing the target group to the guidance programmes, such as establishing referral structures, or awareness-raising measures. Outreach may occur through **'reaching out' to the target group** directly, but it also will occur through **'reaching into' organisations** that serve the target group. At its core, outreach in GOAL aims to identify and attract those adults who would not normally engage with either counselling services or further education and training.

8.1 Context and aims

GOAL programme services should be analysed in a more general context of guidance services available in the system of public employment services (PES). In Lithuania adult guidance services provided within PES services are very well known to clients and public in general. It is related to the fact that municipalities and PES tightly cooperate in solving local unemployment problems, therefore, many of municipalities offices' clients who are unemployed are referred to PES where they receive guidance services. In recent years PES have strengthened and expanded their guidance services thanks to ESF funding. A model of serving clients was changed: from 2017 unemployed persons / job-seekers from their first visit to PES are served by employment counsellor who assists unemployed in the search for job and helps to create a personal action plan according to his experience. At a later stage unemployed persons are referred to career counsellors who assist unemployed in further actions (guidance, interests' assessment, counselling on learning issues, etc.). PES invests a great deal of time and efforts into outreach activities. As one PES representative noted they organise numerous information sessions and campaigns at education institutions, disseminate information about information events, use social media: facebook, Instagram, participate in TV programmes, public round tables, but still face-to-face contact remains very important.

Thus, there was no point in opposing GOAL services to PES guidance services. The GOAL aimed to explore a possible adults' guidance model in education institutions taking into account a possible cooperation with PES. One of the sites (VJLMTC) was already a partner with PES offices. The GOAL sites built their outreach strategies on existing and potential partners, they established new contacts, however, establishing sustainable new partnerships was a challenging task.

8.2 Outreach strategies

Overview

Outreach activities within GOAL were based on current partnerships of the sites, mainly the Lithuanian Labour Exchange local office, Vilnius youth labour centre, Vilnius municipality and several employers and NGOs. The current capacity of the sites was too limited to organise extensive outreach activities and to serve many extra clients. Information campaigns were organised and information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions and in the sites. VJLMTC was more proactive in outreach to low-skilled people – it organised information campaigns in the local PES office to invite potential learners for guidance sessions, searched for clients in internet and posted announcements. VAEC was more focused on working with newly enrolled students to motivate them to learn in VAEC and to continue learning after graduation, nevertheless it did disseminate information about guidance services to local community (e.g. in information desks in the local shops, municipality's local branch and in local community centre). The monitoring data revealed that 26% clients self-referred to the service, a third were referred by unemployment services (31%), and another third (34%) by educational institutions and educational support services. A very small share of clients (2%) was referred by social welfare services.

Strengths and achievements

GOAL helped to strengthen sites' partnerships with existing partners and establish new ones. Information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions, leading to more referrals. In addition, the partnership between the GOAL sites developed and, importantly, both see the way for more intense cooperation in the future. We believe that participation in GOAL did prove to the sites the importance of having good and settled contacts with referring institutions if they want to keep new clients coming, especially if the focus is mostly on low educated or qualified adults.

8.3 Challenges and barriers

The sites managed to recruit the planned number of service users and did not report any difficulties. After Wave 1 it was agreed to focus more on **recruiting unmotivated clients and female clients and to expand partnerships with new organisations**, e.g. NGOs and municipal welfare services. This was partially achieved: in Wave 2, 15 clients of 50 were female. New contacts with NGOs were established, however, the trials to establish partnership with municipal welfare services were not so successful. Local policy actors did not see the actual benefit of referring their clients to GOAL services since they were already in close contacts with the guidance services of PES.

Both programme staff and policymakers stressed that the main challenge in terms of outreach in Lithuania remains reaching those individuals who are lacking motivation. We presume, and data received from clients appear to confirm, that majority of those who participated in GOAL can be regarded as motivated, because they showed initiative and showed up for the guidance session. Despite their low level of education, they reported that they have learning goals and like to learn new things. According to policy actors, low educated people often lack the motivation to learn and

make changes in their life. Therefore, 'outreach' services have to find these people and provide them with a range of services: information on learning and jobs available, counselling, including psychological counselling when needed, etc. There is no agreement which institutions would be the most appropriate to reaching this target group. A challenge remains of **how to prepare institutions providing guidance services for working with unmotivated, low-educated people** from a deprived background and to establish sustainable partnerships with NGOs and municipal welfare services, the organisations most active in Lithuania in serving this target group.

Policy actors during their focus group also noted the low mobility of counselling services. Counselling services are institutionalised in PES or education institutions but experiences in other countries collected during GOAL and other projects, study visits shows successful guidance and training practices in libraries, shopping centres or even hospitals. In Lithuania municipal level adult education coordinators now are exploring the adult education situation and creating municipal level action plans. But still a problem of reaching low-motivated clients exist and there is a lack of staff who could search for these persons and help them. Policy actors agreed that **the role of NGOs in guidance services delivery should be explored in more detail**. NGOs work is based on different principles than state-owned and municipal institutions. NGOs work with population groups at social risk, they have a good reputation at local communities. It is very likely that investment into the services provided by NGOs would be more cost-efficient than funding regular VET or adult education institutions who don't have a good access to low-skilled and low-motivated adults. At least partnerships between education institutions delivering guidance services and NGOs should be encouraged and supported where NGOs could play a more active outreach / referral function.

8.4 Key findings

Context and aims

Lithuania did not have outreach as a GOAL intervention strategy. Nevertheless, outreach activities have taken place through partnerships between GOAL sites and their partners.

GOAL programme services should be analysed in a more general context of guidance services available in the system of public employment services (PES). In Lithuania adult guidance services provided within PES services are very well known to clients and public in general. In recent years PES have strengthened and expanded their guidance services thanks to ESF funding. A model of serving clients was changed and from 2017 unemployed persons / job-seekers from their first visit to PES are served by employment counsellor and at a later stage unemployed persons are referred to career counsellors. Because of strong position of PES services there was no point in opposing GOAL services to PES guidance services. The GOAL aimed to explore a possible adults' guidance model in education institutions taking into account a possible cooperation with PES.

Outreach strategies

Outreach activities within GOAL were based on current partnerships of the sites, mainly the Lithuanian Labour Exchange local office, Vilnius youth labour centre, Vilnius municipality and several employers and NGOs. Information campaigns were organised and information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions and in the sites. The monitoring data revealed that 26% clients self-referred to the service, a third were referred by unemployment services (31%), and another third (34%) by educational institutions and educational support services. A very small share of clients (2%) was referred by social welfare services.

Challenges and barriers

Due at least in part to the positioning of GOAL within educational institutions, some outreach challenges faced by other participating countries have been avoided. In particular, GOAL in Lithuania has had **good access to relatively motivated clients**. A challenge was to attract clients whose greater level of disadvantage results in lower motivation. One site (VJLMTC) made greater efforts to recruit more highly disadvantaged clients. A very small share of clients (2%) was referred by social welfare services. This leads us to assume that social welfare services provide very little guidance and counselling about possible learning. This opinion was expressed by policy actors, that municipal services do not offer counselling on education and career for their visitors.

There is no agreement which institutions would be the most appropriate to reaching the most deprived low-motivated clients. Policy actors during their focus group noted low mobility of counselling services and proposed that **the role of NGOs in guidance services delivery should be explored in more detail**. It is very likely that investment into the services provided by NGOs would be more cost-efficient than funding regular VET or adult education institutions who don't have a good access to low-skilled and low-motivated adults.

8.5 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Taking into account the absence of regular funding for counselling services (provided outside of PES system), if more extensive outreach efforts are adopted, this is likely to have implications for programme resources and costs. It may also have implications on outcomes, as **more disadvantaged clients can be expected to achieve fewer positive outcomes than less disadvantaged clients**. A comprehensive national level analysis of institutional network dealing with low-motivated disadvantaged clients and barriers that clients face in reaching services should be performed to identify the duplications and the gaps in institutional framework. In the existence of strong PES system for counselling job-seekers and unemployed, a political support should be secured to expand an alternative service. Such services should be built on actual needs of existing and potential clients.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The outreach services are largely impacted by policy issues: strong positioning of PES services due to ESF funding and lack of systemic funding to provision of counselling services in educational institutions.

Implications for policy

The GOAL experience showed that GOAL sites without additional funding and clear mandate would not be capable of providing high-quality guidance services targeted exceptionally for low educated / low skilled persons. The relatively high cost of counselling services per client may have implications for policymakers' ability and willingness to support GOAL or similar programmes in the future, after EU funding has ceased. The decisions regarding expanding services on wider scale should be based on the needs analysis including analysis of overall current institutional framework and actual costs-benefit analysis. In estimating costs of the system ESF spending on counselling services within PES and actual gains should be taken into account. Supporting NGOs to play a more active role in outreach or referral, creating mobile counselling places or delegating responsibilities for building adult counselling system to municipal level (based on municipal adult education coordinators network) are other options.

9 Service user outcomes

Over the course of this evaluation, quantitative data have been collected on a broad range of outcome measures. These include: educational outcomes, such as enrolling on or completing a course; attitudinal outcomes, e.g. client attitudes to learning; and non-cognitive outcomes, e.g. client self-efficacy. Evaluators have also collected qualitative data on outcomes – for example, client perspectives on the benefits of the programme. This chapter first summarises key findings across a broad range of outcome measures, then interprets those findings in the light of key contextual factors that may influence client outcomes.

9.1 Quantitative findings, by data source

Service User Satisfaction Survey

The **client satisfaction survey** recorded information from service users on their awareness about the next steps that were available to them, their plans, and their motivation. In general service users assessed the outcomes of the guidance sessions positively (see Table 9.1). Compared with other statements about outcomes and impact, the largest share of respondents chose **‘I am more motivated after the counselling session’, ‘I am more aware now of your education and training options’ and ‘I will follow up on the advice given by the counsellor’**. These outcomes were reconfirmed by programme staff and participants observations during interviews, where the increased motivation of participants and trust in guidance personnel were underlined.

After the counselling session(s) a larger share of clients felt that the next steps were clearer (53%) and the counselling helped them to plan what to do next (54%), they felt more motivated (74%) and more aware of education and training options (64%) and were determined to follow up on the advice given by the counsellor (59%). The least positive assessment was given to the awareness on job options (43%). Positive assessment of guidance outcomes was affirmed by the fact that far fewer clients assessed outcomes as “somewhat” positive and that very few clients (from 2 to 4%) were critical about the outcomes.

Table 9.1. *Outcomes of guidance - evaluation by clients (client satisfaction survey)*

	Yes		No		Somewhat		Did not discuss	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Are the next steps clearer after the counselling session	53	53	2	2	45	45	-	-
Did the counselling help you to plan what you want to do next	54	54	5	5	41	41	-	-
Are you more motivated after the counselling session	74	74	4	4	22	22	-	-
Are you more aware now of your education and training options	63	63	1	1	31	31	4	4

Are you more aware now of your job options	43	43	4	4	46	46	7	7
	Yes		No		Maybe		Did not discuss	
Do you think you will follow up on the advice given by the counsellor	59	59	1	1	40	40	-	-

Data analysis of statements by target group, gender and education level did not show significant differences. When comparing guidance outcomes by client age (see Tables B 2.- B 7 in the Annex) after the Wave 1 a general observation was that, compared to younger clients, **clients aged over 26 tended to be more positive about the outcomes of session**. The Wave 2 monitoring data partly reconfirmed the statement and showed that clients from 19 to 25 were the least positive about the outcomes of session (except for the statement about the motivation after the counselling session).

Programme exit data

Results of the session

As shown in Table 9.8 the main reason for the end of guidance sessions was that in the Lithuanian programme model **clients have finished planned number of sessions (either one in Wave 1 or more than two in Wave 2)**. A minor part of clients (two and three respectively) discontinued guidance because of distance and employment. 'Other reasons' included participation in compulsory military service, going abroad for work, and personal reasons.

Table 9.8. 'Why did the guidance end?', Lithuania (multiple choice question)

	N	%
Not known (client would not say)	1	1
Got job	3	3
Completed planned number of sessions	82	82
Distance	2	2
Other	14	14

According to clients the result of the session was that information was provided about what to study and where; development of a personal action plan; interest inventory; assessment of key competences and consulting about financial assistance for learning (see Table 9.9). Such results (i.e. the content of session) were confirmed by the focus group of staff and interviews with service users. For 'other' results of the session, results very directly related to employment were registered (information about requirements regarding employment, reference to employer).

Table 9.9. *Result of the session, Lithuania (N=99)*

	N	% from cases	% from responses
Being informed about what can study and where	72	29	74
Development of a personal action plan	35	14	36
Interest inventory	32	13	33
Assessment of key competences	21	8	21
Given information on how to find financial resources for taking up a study course	15	6	15
Career plan / portfolio	15	6	15
Given information on how to overcome barriers	13	5	13
Assessment of study skills/ study habits	13	5	13
Information on short time courses	10	4	10
Information on formal qualifications	6	2	6
Information about formal education courses	4	2	4
Information on retraining courses	4	2	4
Information about non-formal training	2	1	2
Other	10	4	10

The data monitoring system registered whether Wave 2 clients felt that they achieved guidance objectives and took steps that they hoped for when they came for the guidance (Table 9.10). In general, staff recorded a high level of achievement of clients' guidance objectives. Out of 50 Wave 2 clients only two (4%) did not take the steps they hoped for when they came for guidance; 10 (20%) have partially taken steps and 38 (76%) have fully taken steps (Table 9.10). The data summarised in Table 9.10 and 9.11 also showed that:

- VJLMTC clients were more positive about achieving their objectives;
- of those who were negative about achieving their guidance objectives (N=2), one came to guidance to explore educational opportunities and one to find financial resources for learning;
- of those who were slightly critical about achieving guidance objectives (N=10), five came to guidance to explore educational opportunities, two – to get information about different institutions and three – to find financial resources for learning.

Table 9.10. *'Have you taken steps you hoped for?', Lithuania (N=50)*

	All		VAEC		VJLMTC	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes, fully	38	76	16	64	22	88
Yes, partially	10	20	8	32	2	8
No	2	4	1	4	1	4

Table 9.11. *'Have you taken steps you hoped for by the main reason for seeking guidance?', Lithuania (N=50)*

	Yes, fully		Yes, partially		No	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	24	63	5	50	1	50
To get information about different institutions and their roles	1	3	2	20	-	-
To get assistance with learning technique/ strategies	1	3	-	-	-	-
To get assistance with job seeking	3	8	3	30	-	-
To find financial resources for learning	7	18	-	-	1	50
To find links between personal interest and occupational/ educational opportunities	2	5	-	-	-	-
Total	38	100	10	100	2	100

Clients were asked about barriers that stopped from taking steps which they hoped to when they came to guidance. Responses received from 12 clients show that the largest share of service users (six out of 12) chose the answer 'other personal reasons' (Table 9.12). The other common reasons indicated were related to psychological factors (lack of confidence/ motivation) and personal characteristics (age and limited proficiency in country's main language).

Table 9.12. *'What would you say has prevented you from taking steps you hoped to when they came for the guidance? Lithuania (N=12)*

	N	% from cases	% from responses (N=12)
Limited proficiency in country's main language	2	9	17
Too busy at work	1	5	8
Lack of information about courses	1	5	8
No suitable courses available	1	5	8
Age	3	14	25
Health problems (incl. mental and physical health)	1	5	8
Lack of confidence	3	14	25
Lack of motivation	2	9	17
Lack of support from family	1	5	8
Other personal reasons	6	27	50
Other	1	5	8
Total	22	100	183

Counsellors when asked about the achievements by clients over the duration of counselling have distinguished information about training opportunities and employment opportunities and improved confidence (Table 9.13). From “harder” outcomes entering education was mentioned and entering employment was not underlined. The reason for that may be that achievement of this type of outcomes needed more time.

Table 9.13. *‘What did the client achieve/change over the duration of counselling? Lithuania (N=50)*

	N	% from cases	% from responses (N=50)
Improved confidence	25	26	50
Improved job-specific skills	2	2	4
Gained information about training/education opportunities	40	42	80
Gained information about employment opportunities	16	17	32
Entered education/training	11	12	22
Other	2	2	4
Total	96	100	192

Analysis of data by gender revealed that improved confidence was more characteristic to female clients (93% compared to 31% of clients). The same is to be said about getting information about employment opportunities (53% of female clients compared to 23% of male clients). The same share of clients (80%) received information about training opportunities.

The sample with exit data (N=50) was too small to analysing differences in outcomes by other client characteristics (age, education, target group) as well as changes in attitudes to learning, learning and career objectives.

The comparison of self-efficacy scores collected for Wave 2 clients did not reveal that clients’ self-perceived ability to achieve desired outcomes in life has changed to a greater extent over GOAL sessions. The scores for the three statements about self-efficacy from clients’ first and second sessions were calculated for each time point and summing all three responses, where -3 (minus three) points represents the largest possible positive change, 0 points would mean no change and points above 0 – decrease in self-efficacy. As summarised in Table 9.13, for the majority of clients (39 of 50) no changes in self-efficacy were observed. Amongst those who registered some change, similar number of clients (six of 50 and five of 50) showcased increase and decrease in self-efficacy.

Table 9.13. *Changes in self-efficacy scores in Wave 2, Lithuania*

Score	N	%
-3	1	2
-2	1	2
-1	4	8

0	39	78
1	5	10
Total	50	100

Follow-up survey

Follow-up survey confirmed a mainly positive evaluation of guidance outcomes and gave additional insights about them. Twelve of 31 clients reached in follow-up survey (39%) claimed that they set both types of goals during counselling, only one client (3%) stressed exclusively employment related goals and eight clients (26%) stressed exclusively education related goals. Almost a third of clients (ten of 31) stated that they did not set particular goals during counselling.

When assessing the confidence and progress in achieving goals (Tables 9.14 and 9.15), the following insights can be made:

- only two of 21 clients did not agree that counselling helped them to be more confident about achieving goals;
- a larger share of clients, especially when asked about employment related goals, chose an answer that counselling partially helped to become more confident (50% against 40% in case of education related goals and 69% against 31% in case of employment related goals);
- a larger progress in achieving goals was observed for education related goals. Nine of 20 claimed they fully achieved their goals and eight claimed they made some progress, whereas in case of employment related goals four of 13 claimed they fully achieved goals, whereas, nine claimed they made some progress. We can speculate that it is relatively more difficult to make progress in the employment area in such a short period after counselling.

Table 9.14. *Did the counselling help you to be more confident about achieving your goals?, Lithuania (N=31, multiple choice question)*

	Education/learning/training goals			Employment/career/job goals		
	N	%	Valid %	N	%	Valid %
Yes, a lot	8	26	40	4	13	31
Yes, partially	10	32	50	9	29	69
No, not at all	2	6	10	0	0	0
Total	20	65	100	13	42	100
Missing data	11	35		18	58	
Total	31	100		31	100	

Table 9.15. 'How much progress have you made towards achieving those goals', Lithuania (N=31)

	Education/learning/training goals			Employment/career/job goals		
	N	%	Valid %	N	%	Valid %
I have fully achieved what I hoped to	9	29	45	3	10	23
I have made some progress, but haven't fully achieved what I hoped to	8	26	40	9	29	69
I have not made any progress	3	10	15	1	3	8
Total	20	65	100	13	42	100
Missing data	11	35		18	58	
Total	31	100		31	100	

Follow-up survey clients were able to specify concretely their goals. The following examples of education related goals were given by clients 'wanted to become a welder', 'wanted to finish course of bricklayer', 'to learn something more', 'to find out where I could learn', 'to start learning and get a diploma', 'to finish my learning', 'to get a profession'. For employment related goals the following examples were given: 'to get a profession and find a job', 'to get a well paid job', 'to get a better job', 'to work according to my qualification'.

Regarding the progress in achieving goals, ten of 20 clients with education related goals in counselling have enrolled on a course and for nine of them the course led to a qualification (one client was not sure of that). Eight clients explained that the course was chosen after their counsellor explanation, one client was referred to the course by employer and one client was referred to the course by unemployment services/social services. The main reasons for enrolling into course seem to be related with career (52%) or improvement of skills in general (24%) (see Table 9.16).

Table 9.16. 'Why have you enrolled on this course?', Lithuania

	N	% of responses	% of cases (N=10)
I need to do the course to get a specific job	7	33	70
I need to do the course to improve my career prospects	4	19	40
I want to improve my skills in general	5	24	50
The course is a part of the recognition of prior learning process	2	10	20
It was suggested to me by my counsellor, but I'm not sure why	2	10	20
Other (I just wanted to get a diploma)	1	5	10
Total	21	100	210

Nine of ten clients explained why they did not enrol into a course (Table 9.17). The number of clients is too low for drawing robust conclusions, but more clients indicated reasons such as the cost of the course or not being able to find suitable course.

Table 9.17. *Why you have not enrolled on a course?', Lithuania*

		N	% of responses	% of cases (N=10)
Valid	I was too busy	1	8	10
	It was too expensive / I could not afford it	2	17	20
	I could not find the course I wanted	3	25	30
	I wasn't confident enough to enrol	1	8	10
	I never wanted/aimed to enrol on a course	1	8	10
	Other	3	25	30
	Total	11	92	122
Missing	Answer not provided	1	8	
Total		12	100	

Clients were also asked about the change in any aspects of employment and it appeared that for a major part of clients (60%) the employment status have not changed (Table 9.18). However, it should be taken into account that cross-tabulation with information about enrolment into courses showed that nine clients of those 18 who claimed that their employment status did not change indicated that they have enrolled into training. Those who indicated changes explained that they got a job or got a promotion (Table 9.19).

Table 9.18. *'Has your employment or any aspects of it changed since you started counselling?', Lithuania*

		N	%	Valid %
Valid	Yes	12	39	40
	No	18	58	60
	Total	30	97	100
Missing	Answer not provided	1	3	
Total		31	100	

Table 9.19. *'What are the changes in employment?', Lithuania*

	N	% of responses	% of cases (N=12)
I got a job (previously unemployed)	11	69	92
I got a promotion	3	19	25
Other	2	12	17
Total	16	100	133

When assessing client outcomes, answers to an open question about the benefits from counselling can be interpreted as positive personal gains (rather than economical) and they also speak positively of counselling sessions process. The answers can be roughly grouped into following categories:

- The counselling gave benefits in general (N=5);
- The counselling gave confidence (*'I feel more confident'*) (N=1);
- Education and training related benefits (enrolled or finished the course) (N=4);
- The counselling provided with information (N=4);
- It was interesting/ pleasant to attend sessions (N=6);
- Passive answers (only listened, at least did not stay at home, client felt forced to attend counselling) (N=4);
- No benefits (N=1);
- Don't remember, I am not sure, no answer (N=6).

9.2 Qualitative findings: benefits of guidance

Client perspectives

The main expectation that clients had of their session with the counsellor was that they would receive advice regarding learning and/or jobs.

In qualitative interviews, clients were very positive about the outcomes of guidance and did not report any shortcomings or proposals for improvement. They confirmed that they felt **their self-esteem had increased and that they were more motivated to make positive changes in their life**. This can be considered as **unplanned outcome**. For example, one client during interview stated:

'After counselling I understood that I am not such a loser as I previously thought. My counsellor persuaded me that after finishing my education I can find a good job, I hope to continue this way'.

Programme staff perspectives

Programme staff reported that, from their point of view, the most desirable GOAL outcome was that **clients would start thinking of and projecting their future**.

This was backed up by counsellors, who reported that:

'Some clients do change after the session. They become more confident, their pressure and anger against others disappears'.

Other stakeholders' perspectives

The following benefits were mentioned by programme staff: more active engagement of clients into projecting their career and increased motivation to learn or work. They also acknowledged that sessions, in particular for younger clients, helped people to regain self-confidence, to understand the meaning of learning and form a positive attitude towards oneself and the society.

9.3 Key findings

Key outcomes

The main reason for the end of guidance sessions was that in the Lithuanian programme model clients have finished planned number of sessions (either one in Wave 1 or more than two in Wave 2) this shows that the sites managed to avoid dropping out of the sessions.

According to clients the result of the session was that information was provided about what to study and where; development of a personal action plan; interest inventory; assessment of key competences and consulting about financial assistance for learning.

In general service users assessed the outcomes of the guidance sessions positively. They felt that after the counselling session(s) a larger share of clients felt that the next steps were clearer (53%) and the counselling helped them to plan what to do next (54%), they felt more motivated (74%) and more aware of education and training options (64%) and were determined to follow up on the advice given by the counsellor (59%). The least positive assessment was given to the awareness on job options (43%). Only two of 31 clients reached in follow-up survey did not agree that counselling helped them to be more confident about achieving goals.

Quantitative data indicated a high level of achievement of clients' guidance objectives where out of fifty Wave 2 clients only two (4%) did not take the steps they hoped for when they came for guidance. A larger progress in achieving goals was observed for education related goals.

The positive assessments from clients of the service outcomes suggest that the GOAL service is of good quality and that the professionalism of staff is high. In addition to the obvious 'hard' outcomes of sessions (getting necessary information and referring to training) service users reported additional unexpected ('soft') benefits: e.g. after the sessions their self-esteem had increased and they became more motivated for positive changes in their life. This is also confirmed by staff, who indicated that the sessions, particularly for younger people, helped clients to regain self-confidence and form a positive attitude about themselves and society.

Strengths and achievements

The main achievement of the programme is definitely positive outcomes of clients: 'soft' outcomes related to empowerment of clients, change in self-esteem and self-confidence and 'harder' outcomes related to enrolment to training courses, finding a job, change of employment status. Even though the data from clients does not allow to conclude that majority of clients reached 'hard' and measurable outcomes, still soft outcomes are just as important. For example, the monitoring data showed that majority of clients were very certain about the increased motivation after counselling compared to statements about other outcomes. From the client perspective we can evaluate that positive outcomes especially when they are clearly manifested in softer outcomes are influenced by a high level of staff dedication and commitment - 98% of the clients were satisfied with their contact with counsellor. We should remember that absolute majority of GOAL clients were in counselling for the first time and their positive experiences just proves that there is a high demand of services.

Challenges and barriers

Still rather a substantial part of clients have assessed that they were not fully confident if the next steps were clearer after the counselling session, that the counselling helped to plan next steps, that job options were clearer and that they would follow up on the advice given by the counsellor. One-fifth of clients claimed that they just partially took steps they hoped to. Similar assessments about partial achievement of goals were given during follow-up survey. This situation proves that **clients' positive experiences of GOAL do not necessarily mean they will achieve their desired outcomes**; for many clients, there are significant barriers – attitudinal, situational, and more – to overcome.

9.4 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Taking into account the **absence of regular funding** for counselling services (provided outside of PES system), if more extensive outreach efforts are adopted, this is likely to have implications for programme resources and costs.

Policy implications

The experience of GOAL in Lithuania suggests that although in general GOAL **outcomes** from perspective of client should be assessed as **highly positive**, clients face a large mix of personal and other **barriers** in fully achieving their goals or taking one step up after the counselling. This implies that collaboration with a diverse group of specialists and expanding resources for the target group needs to be looked at from the policy level.

The model of one session in Wave 1 after overall GOAL experience did not prove to be very effective, because it is hardly possible to serve the needs of clients in just one meeting, nevertheless, it had some positive effect on the introduction of minor changes in viewing their life situation and taking new decisions related to education or/and job search.

Implications of policy

Taking into account such outcomes of guidance as enrolment into course, for some clients it will not be possible to achieve these outcomes because of **financial** reasons. Only a small part of training programmes is free of charge or suitable for adult learners. Partners from PES also complained that many formal training programmes are too long for adult learners and, therefore, they cannot be funded by ESF. When it comes to **guidance for seniors**, there is even less offer in terms of training that would help them integrate into labour market. Then some other activation measures should be proposed, e.g. volunteering schemes, publicly supported jobs, etc.

Implications for policy

Counselling for adult learners can only be effective if combined with other incentives like active employment policy with measures for integrating vulnerable groups back to the labour market. If there is no offer of further training, courses and programmes, or financial incentives, the counselling itself is unlikely to have sustainable effects.

10 Service quality

One of the five intervention strategies piloted in GOAL is the implementation of high-quality guidance services. This chapter provides findings and analysis on the quality of the guidance service provided by GOAL in Lithuania. It draws on quantitative data from the client satisfaction survey as well as qualitative data gathered from the range of GOAL stakeholders in interviews and in focus groups.

10.1 High quality guidance services for low-educated adults: implementation and aims

In Lithuania adult guidance services are associated with the services of public employment services, however, these services are applicable only to job-seekers and unemployed. In addition to PES, services that are a part of education institutions have staff who are also delivering guidance on learning options inside or outside education institutions. The GOAL aimed to explore a possible adult guidance model in two education institutions which were already known to offer guidance to adults. There was no point in opposing GOAL services to PES services which are widely acknowledged and sufficiently funded. Rather the idea was to analyse who are the clients of education institutions counselling services, how do they assess services and counsellors expertise, what are their partnerships, what are their relations with PES services and is there a need for and what can be done to expand GOAL-type services.

GOAL sites had already structures (e.g. career centre), staff and some tools in place. At the start of the programme each site together with GOAL programme coordinator and experts has prepared a SWOT analysis and identified needs and expectations from the GOAL. Due to limitation of programme resources the GOAL programme could focus only on three of five GOAL strategies, namely:

- establishment of relevant **networks** (1): the GOAL sites maintained existing or established new partnerships with other education institutions, employment services, municipal bodies, employers, and NGOs in order to reach the specific target groups and to harmonise the provision of guidance.
- development of **tools** (2): based on analysis of experience, the following new guidance tools were prepared for trial in GOAL sites: a form of semi-structured interview, tools for mapping competences and interests to use according to needs of clients, structure and framework for a Career Plan and written information about CV and motivation letter writing to be used for sharing with clients;
- **quality** of guidance services (5): guidance services for 100 clients were tested in two intervention sites – different orientation education institutions in order to improve the quality and scope of service provision, to evaluate effectiveness and provide recommendations for keeping the service sustainable.

Two other intervention strategies were tackled indirectly:

- focus groups and other communication with the GOAL staff gave a chance to analyse the challenges that staff faces in relation to **competences** development, especially in their work with low-educated adults;
- GOAL sites and GOAL coordinator were engaged in **outreach activities** through their contact with existing GOAL partners and search for potential GOAL partners. Information campaigns were organised and information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions and in the sites.

10.2 Challenges and barriers to high quality services

The main barrier to the services appeared to be the lack of resources and lack of regular funding. The sites relied on project funding in delivering services usually, e.g. VAEC was involved previously in ESF funding scheme for school-based career counselling services and VJLMTC was a part of ESF schemes for counselling of job-seekers / unemployed.

The GOAL experience showed that GOAL sites without additional funding and clear mandate would not be capable of providing high-quality guidance services. Since there is no special funding available for adult guidance, it is up to each institution's management to prioritise this area and dedicate resources to it.

Another barrier was related to the fact that the counselling services were institution-based with the **strong focus on attracting potential learners. Counselling thus runs the risk of being institution-centred rather than client-centres** although institutions when needed referred learners to training programmes of other education providers.

Building sustainable new partnerships appeared to be a challenging task. New partners approached were quite open for suggestions to cooperate, however, practically they were not so active in practical work and cooperation. One of the barriers for new partnerships was that GOAL **could offer counselling sessions to limited number of clients** and no other real and tangible motivation for partners to be active in the project could be offered. The least successful were the trials to establish partnership with municipal welfare services. Local policy actors did not see the actual benefit of referring their clients to GOAL services since they were already in close contacts with guidance services of PES.

10.3 Strengths and achievements

Service user perspectives

As seen in Table 10.1., data from the client satisfaction survey show that 98% of the clients were satisfied with their contact with counsellor.¹³ The rest 6% evaluated their satisfaction as 'somewhat'.

¹³ As the counselling session was assessed very positively by every client, there is no purpose served by cross tabs in this question.

Table 10.1. ‘Overall, were you satisfied with the counselling session’, Lithuania

	N	%
Yes	94	94
Somewhat	6	6
Total	100	100

The main subject that clients sought advice on was learning and/or jobs and all clients that were interviewed noted that their expectations were fully met. No respondents to the client satisfaction survey suggested any improvements that could be made to the service, and all said they would recommend it to others. According to clients, **counsellors provided the advice and encouragement they needed to fulfil their dreams and objectives.** Personal contact with the counsellor and the counsellor’s competences were highlighted as strengths of the service. Though clients were absolutely satisfied with services received and did not propose any changes, the thoughts expressed by them indirectly are evidence the importance of (and the need to strengthen) good personal contact between a counsellor and a client, a better suitability of face-to-face contact against group counselling (or at least to have a combination of both type counselling) and a need to concentrate such services in one location. As an illustration, the following thoughts were expressed by two low-educated clients from deprived backgrounds:

‘I was surprised by the sincere and long conversation, I found out many interesting things about myself’.

‘We had a serious conversation, I tried to sketch a detail and they offered a training in the same location. It is good, that I did not have to run from one side of Vilnius to another’.

Follow-up survey confirmed a mainly positive evaluation of guidance outcomes and gave additional insights about them. When assessing the confidence and progress in achieving goals (Tables 9.13 and 9.14), the following insights can be made:

- only two of 21 clients did not agree that counselling helped them to be more confident about achieving goals;
- a larger share of clients, especially when asked about employment related goals, chose an answer that counselling only partially helped to become more confident (50% against 40% in case of education related goals and 69% against 31% in case of employment related goals);
- a larger progress in achieving goals was observed for education related goals. Nine of 20 claimed they fully achieved their goals and eight claimed they made some progress, whereas in case of employment related goals four of 13 claimed they fully achieved goals, nine claimed they made some progress.

Programme staff perspectives on guidance quality

Programme staff felt that clients mainly had positive experiences with the service. They believed that staff usually managed to have professional contact with most of the clients, because if they showed

up for a session, it meant they were motivated to change their life. Clients also spoke very highly of counsellors as professionals.

The following features emerged as the strengths of the service:

- competence and experience of counsellors;
- staff had established a professional and trustworthy contact;
- both sites have worked out a rather simple guidance model and a package of tools for counselling;
- existence of partnerships with referring institutions.

Speaking about factors which might negatively impact on service quality, programme staff referred to **a lack of targeted funding for guidance**. Education institutions offer guidance on their own initiative and from their own funds, counsellors do it only part time and guidance is not their main activity. Therefore, **institutions are very much dependent on project activities and it is very difficult to ensure sustainability of service in terms of follow-up of clients and regular work with specific target groups**.

In terms of service weaknesses, lack of instruments designed specifically for target groups was mentioned. Programme staff also admitted to a lack of proactivity in finding new partners and referring institutions as well as lack of cooperation with other education institutions. Such a cooperation could result in referring clients to other education institutions in case they need another education opportunities. Both sites admitted the lack of arrangements for clients follow up and that tools for recognition of prior learning should be developed or improved.

Partner and policy stakeholder perspectives on guidance quality

There was no common opinion about the quality of guidance services among policy actors. Some believed that the existing services were acceptable, whereas others were less positive and reported that adult education guidance did not receive sufficient attention.

All the policy actors who were interviewed agreed that **the quality of guidance is directly related to the principle that client should be at the centre of the guidance process**. They felt that low-skilled adults were very fragile group that need special access and methods. There were reserved opinions that there are tools and methods but they not always were applicable to adults and very specific groups, e.g. persons with low literacy and older persons. As noted in Chapter 7, GOAL programme staff developed tools suitable for adults and used additional guidance tools, namely, a form of semi-structured interview and tools for mapping competences and interests.

A **quality of personal contact** between counsellor and client is important in order to change negative attitude of clients towards learning. Policy actors also felt that it is important to keep a contact with clients for more than one session and engage clients into consecutive several sessions, although many clients might believe that one session is enough.

Policy actors thought that the network of services (employment offices, VET schools and adult education centres) was sufficient but not properly coordinated and too fragmented with insufficient interlinks. Policy actors seemed to agree that education institutions, especially VET institutions, are appropriate to offer guidance provided they have a mandate to provide services, a regular funding and trained guidance staff. Competence and availability of counsellors was underlined in relation to quality of services. The common opinion was that there was no system for training such specialists.

10.4 Key findings

Implementation and aims

Due to the limitation of programme resources the GOAL programme could focus only on three of five GOAL strategies, namely: establishment of relevant **networks**, development of **tools** (2) and **quality** of guidance services (5). Two other intervention strategies related to counsellors' competences and outreach activities were tackled indirectly. The GOAL aimed to explore a possible adult guidance model in education institutions which were already known to offer guidance to adults: i.e. to analyse which are the clients of education institutions counselling services, how do they assess services and counsellors expertise, what are their partnerships, what are their relations with PES services and is there a need for and what can be done to expand GOAL-type services.

Strengths and achievements

The absolute majority of clients were satisfied with their contact with counsellor and did not suggest any improvements that could be made to the service. They especially underlined personal contact with counsellor and their competence as strengths of the service. This is evidence of the importance of and the need to strengthen a good personal contact between a counsellor and a client, and, thus, a better suitability of face-to-face contact against group counselling (or at least to have a combination of both types of counselling).

Policy actors also underlined that low-educated persons were a fragile group that benefitted from special access and methods. Staff proposed to tailor guidance tools and methods for the needs of low-educated persons, to **work towards limiting fragmentation of guidance services** and to develop the system for training/ continuing professional development of adult guidance specialists.

Challenges and barriers

The main barrier to the services appeared to be lack of resources and lack of regular funding. The sites in delivering services usually relied on project funding. The GOAL experience showed that GOAL sites without additional funding and clear mandate would not be capable of providing high-quality guidance services. Another barrier was related to the fact that the counselling services were institution-based with the **strong focus on attracting potential learners**.

Building sustainable new partnerships appeared to be a challenging task. One of the barriers for new partnerships was that GOAL **could offer counselling sessions to a limited number of clients** and no other real and tangible motivation for partners to be active in the project could be offered.

Baseline and progress across GOAL's five intervention strategies

Table 10.2 provides a brief evaluative summary of the quality of different aspects of the GOAL programme in Iceland, comparing quality at the start of the evaluation (baseline) and at the end. In this table, we provide numerical ratings for each of the five intervention areas, and an explanation of that rating for each category. These ratings and explanations are provided for the start of the evaluation and the end, with the aim of briefly summarising key issues and change over time. In addition to provide ratings and commentary for the five core GOAL intervention areas, we also address overall service quality and policy interest/support. The latter is a key factor in determining future programme sustainability.

Table 10.2. *Baseline and progress across GOAL's five intervention strategies, plus policy interest/support*

ASPECT OF PROGRAMME OR POLICY		LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT
Partnerships and networks	Start of GOAL	<p>_____</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
		<p>At the start of the programme the sites had already some partnerships established that had existed for some time. Some of them were more formal (e.g. signing a kind of agreement about future cooperation, participation in events, dissemination of news with partners) and some worked quite well (e.g. partnerships of VJLMTC with public employment office and employers).</p>
	End of GOAL	<p>_____</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
		<p>Sustainable partnerships resulting in clients' referral were established with a few new NGOs and employers. New partners that were approached by GOAL coordinator and GOAL sites (e.g. NGOs, employers, municipal branch) were quite open for suggestions to cooperate, however, they were not so active in practical work and cooperation. Their competences of partnerships and networking management need strengthening.</p>
Counsellor competences	Start	<p>_____</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
		<p>Although counsellors did not have educational degree in counselling, but all four counsellors had a tertiary education level qualification, corresponding to Masters level. Two of the four counsellors had a qualification in psychology, which is important in working with socially vulnerable clients. The experience of providing adult guidance varied from five to 20 years.</p>
	End	<p>_____</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
		<p>Participation in GOAL offered counsellors opportunities to build their capacity by using new guidance tools, expanding number of sessions, reflecting on their practices and networking among the sites. The absolute majority of clients was satisfied with their contact with counsellor.</p>
Outreach	Start	<p>_____</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>

		GOAL sites had contacts with partner organisations that were referring clients. Some cooperation, especially with employers and the Public Employment Service, was quite intensive and regular; other partnerships (e.g. NGOs) were fragmented and dependent on project-based funding. Outreach activities mainly focused on sharing information with partner institutions about services available.
	<i>End</i>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>The outreach strategy focused on 'reaching into' organisations that serve the target group instead of directly 'reaching out' to the target group. Information campaigns were organised and information about the availability of GOAL services was disseminated within partner institutions leading to more referrals. A few new partnerships were established. The sites managed to recruit the planned number of service users and did not report any difficulties. However, the sustainability of partnerships depends on funding available for the provision of guidance services.</p>
Tools	<i>Start</i>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>At the start of the programme GOAL counsellors already had a pre-selection of tools for adults counselling. They were quite basic and adjusted by counsellors from tools primarily designed for school-age students.</p>
	<i>End</i>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>A number of guidance tools were offered to counsellors and counsellors evaluated them very positively. Clients could not very thoroughly reflect about the tools that were used during counselling sessions, what does not allow to conclude if counsellors effectively applied the tools designed.</p>
Overall service quality (holistic judgement)	<i>Start</i>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>At the start of the programme the sites provided counselling services mainly to their existing or potential learners. The counsellors were experienced to provide services, they had a pre-selection of tools for work with low-educated adults. VJLTC was more open to public and more engaged in outreach activities in order to find potential learners.</p>
	<i>End</i>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>The clients rated the services and competence of counsellors highly. For majority of clients this was a first experience in receiving counselling services. GOAL counselling seems to have the greatest impact on empowering clients and motivating them to take actions for future. Still rather a substantial part of clients have assessed that they were not fully confident about further steps and following the advice given by the counsellor. On one hand, GOAL could not guarantee outcomes desired by clients will be achieved. There are significant barriers – attitudinal, situational, and more – to overcome. On the other hand,</p>

		GOAL should not be compared to PES counselling services that are directly oriented to clients' employment after PES services.
Policy interest and/or support	<i>Start</i>	<hr/> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		At the start of the programme there was very little policy interest in guidance for the GOAL target group. There were policy declarations in policy documents, policy makers had some interest in adult education and guidance in general, but there were no concrete plans about development of services. Policy interest was not followed up by structural support or funding. There was some structural funding available for the development of counselling system in general in the past and upcoming support was in planning stage. Counselling services were fragmented without national level coordination and underdeveloped cooperation among different parts of the system.
	<i>End</i>	<hr/> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		[Explanation of choice] Because of GOAL, a number of policy makers are now aware that GOAL-style guidance is needed by the target group and that it can be provided in addition to PES services outside of PES system. GOAL gave an opportunity for initial policy level discussion and exchange among actors coming from different parts of the system. There have now been informal expressions of policy support for this type of guidance. However, this increased interest and awareness has not been translated yet into practical support in the form of funding or policy developments.

10.5 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Clients liked the fact that learning services were **in the same location as guidance services**.

Therefore, if clients in the future were to be advised in one location and attend learning in another, the guidance service should ensure a smooth exchange of information with education providers (i.e. information that client was referred and a guarantee that the learning programme is available to client). Low-educated persons may in many cases be highly sensitive to any barriers, and are at increased risk of dropping out when barriers are encountered. There is thus a need for seamlessness between services.

Clients benefit from a service model based on providing **more than one session per client** (on average), as additional sessions may help in the provision of information about next steps, and may help clients to reflect on and negotiate barriers, structural and otherwise.

The results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey of Adult Skills revealed poor Lithuanian results on the problem-solving in technology rich environment (i.e. poor usage of ICT and its practical application). These poor results, along with evidence gathered from clients during interviews and the follow-up survey, suggest that low-educated adults may struggle to use **online guidance resources**, unless these resources are

specifically designed for this target group. This potential challenge highlights the need for face-to-face counselling for this target group.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

Policy actors, programme staff and partners acknowledged current adult guidance system is rather fragmented, with underdeveloped mutual links and exchange of information. This puts a risk on service quality. Because of competition for learners amongst education institutions and no targeted funding for counselling services, **counselling appears to have a strong focus on attracting potential learners to particular education institutions. Counselling thus runs the risk of being institution-centred rather than client-centred. The neutral and independent character of the service should be regarded as one of the important quality criteria.**

Implications for policy

The GOAL experience showed that GOAL sites without **additional funding and clear mandate** would not be capable of providing high-quality guidance services targeted exclusively to low-educated/ low-skilled adults. The relatively high cost of counselling services per client may have implications for policymakers' ability and willingness to support GOAL or similar programmes in the future, after EU funding has ceased. The decisions regarding expanding services should be based on the needs analysis including analysis of overall current institutional framework and actual costs-benefit analysis. In estimating costs of the system ESF spending on counselling services within PES and actual gains should be taken into account.

Counselling for adult learners can only be effective if combined with other incentives like active employment policy with measures for integrating vulnerable groups back to the labour market. If there is no offer of further training, courses and programmes, or financial incentives, the counselling itself is unlikely to have sustainable effects.

11 Conclusions: answering the evaluation questions

The GOAL evaluation was underpinned by five overarching research questions:

1. What programme processes and resources were developed? To what degree did programmes achieve their implementation aims across the five intervention strategies, and what factors at programme and policy level appeared to influence this?
2. What service user outcomes were achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?
3. What was the Return on Expectations? That is, to what degree were programme expectations met?
4. What programme-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?
5. What policy-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?

In this concluding chapter, we address each of these questions. We then highlight some key messages for policy and future programmes.

11.1 What programme processes and resources were developed? To what degree did programmes achieve their implementation aims across the five intervention strategies, and what factors at programme and policy level appeared to influence this?

Due to the limitation of programme resources the GOAL programme could focus only on three of five GOAL strategies, namely, the establishment of relevant **networks**, development of **tools** and **quality** of guidance services. Two other intervention strategies (staff competences and outreach activities) were tackled indirectly.

Before the start of the project, the following GOAL interventions were specified:

- **Collaboration networks** consisting of VET schools and adult education centres will be set up to reach the specific target groups and to harmonise provision of guidance and recognition of competences services in various settings;
- Based on analysis of experiences a **guidance service and competences recognition model and tool** will be prepared for trial in one VET institution and one adult education centre
- **Guidance and competences recognition services** will be tested in one VET institution and one adult education centre in order to improve the quality and scope of service provision.

As a result, the implementation of GOAL resulted in these processes:

- provision of guidance services to 100 low-qualified/ low-skilled clients;

- analysis of quality and clients' satisfaction of guidance services; provision of recommendations for improving the quality of services and keeping the service sustainable;
- exploring the effectiveness and sustainability of partnerships of GOAL sites, maintaining existing or established new partnerships with other education institutions, employment services, municipal bodies, employers, and NGOs;
- piloting of small scale outreach activities so as to inform about GOAL possibilities and attract clients to GOAL services;
- design of guidance tools to work with target group;
- policy dialogue among key policy actors in adults' guidance or their representatives.

Intervention strategies were achieved to a greater extent. Before the start of the GOAL project there was an interest in Lithuania on focusing on the validation of prior learning component of guidance sessions; however, the results from both waves suggest that this component of the guidance service is not acknowledged by clients as a motive to seek for guidance. There is a **low awareness about VPL and its benefits among the target group** and in society in general and education institutions lack experience in applying VPL in practice. Moreover, one of the sites (VAEC) found it difficult to provide VPL services because of their regulations. Therefore, over the course of GOAL it was decided to focus on the guidance component of GOAL service.

11.2 What service user outcomes were achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?

On the basis of monitoring data and qualitative data collected from service users and GOAL staff it can be evaluated that GOAL guidance services generated 'soft' service user outcomes related to empowerment of clients, change in self-esteem and self-confidence and 'harder' outcomes related to clients enrolment to training courses, finding a job, and change of employment status. Even though the data from clients does not allow us to conclude that majority of clients reached 'hard' and measurable outcomes, soft outcomes are also important for GOAL target group to make one step up in the future.

After the counselling session(s) a larger share of clients felt that the next steps were clearer (53%) and the counselling helped them to plan what to do next (54%), they felt more motivated (74%) and more aware of education and training options (64%) and were determined to follow up on the advice given by the counsellor (59%).

More than 80% of clients have passed through GOAL overall counselling process and finished the planned number of sessions (either one in Wave 1 or two or more in Wave 2). The results of the sessions ranged from receiving information about what to study and where; development of a personal action plan; interest inventory; assessment of key competences and consulting about financial assistance for learning.

The follow-up survey data revealed that almost a third of surveyed clients have enrolled on a training course and for 40% of clients their employment status have changed. Due to a small sample these hard outcomes need to be considered with a caution, but, the GOAL results are encouraging. They

provided evidence that there is a need for this type of services even though there exists a strong PES counselling system for job-seekers / unemployed.

11.3 What was the Return on Expectations? That is, to what degree were programme expectations met?

The main expectations from GOAL were to pilot guidance services provision in adult education institutions, which directly provide education services and to assess their quality and outcomes. In addition, it was planned to see what were the existing and possible institutional networks and to help the GOAL sites to maintain partnerships and build new ones. Finally, it was foreseen to analyse the GOAL experience so as to provide evidence about the demand for services to adult education and guidance policy makers. It was expected that during GOAL it would be possible to initiate policy level discussions resulting in higher policy level attention to adult education and guidance services.

The expectations were mostly met since all the results were achieved. The experimentation showed the pluses and minuses of providing such type of guidance services in adult education and VET institutions, showed what can be done differently. Nevertheless, we must report reservations about the sustainability of GOAL services. GOAL experience showed that GOAL sessions were more than just informing about learning options and education institutions. GOAL clients in addition to information and job-mediation services also sought support in tackling with such personal issues as self-esteem and ambition. On the one hand, we can conclude that it is beneficial to keep and support such services in education institutions which have relevant staff and are committed to offering high-quality guidance. On the other hand, the experience showed that some additional funding is needed for such services and, in the absence of additional funding and a clear mandate, GOAL sites would not be capable of providing high-quality guidance services targeted exclusively to low-educated/ low-skilled adults.

Impact on policy level developments should be evaluated critically. At the start of the programme there was very little policy interest in guidance for the GOAL target group. There were declarations in policy documents, and policy makers had some interest in adult education and guidance in general, but there were no concrete plans for the development of GOAL-type services. Policy interest was not followed up by structural support or funding. Because of GOAL, a number of policy makers are now aware that GOAL-style guidance is needed by the target group and that it can be provided in addition to PES services outside of the PES system. GOAL gave an opportunity to initiate policy level discussion and exchange among actors coming from different parts of the system; however, this increased interest and awareness has not yet translated into practical support.

11.4 What programme-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?

High service quality and positive service user outcomes are first of all to be associated with staff competence and experience. The service users highly evaluated professionalism and personal contact with counsellors. The sites chosen already had structures (e.g. career centre), staff and tools in place prior to GOAL. Moreover, they had an institutional interest to engage in GOAL, because they

believed in the potential of guidance services and welcomed proposals regarding improvements. Although even though Wave 1 with one-session model generated positive outcomes for clients, we believe that introduction of more sessions helped to improve GOAL results.

11.5 What policy-level factors were associated with the achievement of high service quality and/or positive service user outcomes?

The demand for GOAL services is influenced by the labour market situation. Employers complain that there are more and more vacancies which are hard to fill due to the lack of relevant labour force. Therefore, GOAL sites' partnership with employment actors (employers and PES) was working very well, but it was challenging to propose learning options or jobs to older GOAL service users.

General policy background did not seem to facilitate the GOAL services, because adult education, compared to other education sectors, seems to be the least prioritised area. At the moment, the success of services to a large extent depends on the motivation of education institutions and their management's attitude towards providing counselling services.

Finally, a strong position of PES services in Lithuania raised a question of GOAL-type service's identity, i.e. what GOAL could offer as an additional value compared to PES services. Especially now, when PES has expanded career counselling services (more information about the change is provided at section 8.1) , the policy support to GOAL-type services is not yet guaranteed.

11.6 Implications and recommendations for future programme development

In building GOAL-like programmes, actions should be taken to alleviate the constraints which GOAL faced in Lithuania: fragmentation of the system and poor coordination of similar guidance initiatives of different actors; lack of systemic/clear financing mechanisms; absence of counselling specialists' standards, competences profiles and low offer of continuing professional development measures; and a lack of guidance tools tailored specifically to target groups.

Before the development of GOAL-like programmes/services it would be beneficial to perform a comprehensive national level analysis of institutional networks serving low-motivated, disadvantaged clients and barriers that clients face in reaching services. This would help to identify the duplications and the gaps in institutional framework. The staff acknowledged that such services should be built on the real needs of existing and potential clients. They welcomed the project but on the other hand they admitted the constraints faced by GOAL – in the absence of targeted funding the sustainability of outcomes achieved is questionable and episodic, and project-based services are in some cases may be regarded as unsustainable or of poorer quality by their clients or partners.

When strong PES or similar system for counselling job-seekers and unemployed exists, a political support should be secured to expand alternative services such as GOAL.

The success of GOAL-like services to a large extent depend on outreach activities. However, more extensive outreach efforts are likely to have implications for programme resources and costs.

Although housing GOAL within educational institutions appears to be very effective in getting the target group to come to counselling sessions, the advice received and opportunities on offer may be influenced by the educational institution's (understandable) need to recruit students. The neutral and independent character of the service should be regarded as one of the important quality criteria.

The Lithuanian GOAL project was to a large extent built on existing partnerships, which should mean these partnerships are sustainable beyond the life of the programme, but there may be an impact on the quality of the partnerships. Future programme development would have to consider carefully how sustainable partnerships can be built, especially with local policy level organisations and NGOs, given the importance of partnerships and networks to each stage of the guidance process.

11.7 Policy implications and recommendations

Implications of policy

Policy actors, programme staff and partners acknowledged that the current adult guidance system is rather fragmented, with underdeveloped mutual links and exchange of information. This fragmentation has potentially negative impacts on service quality. Because of competition for learners amongst education institutions and the lack of targeted funding for counselling services, counselling appears to have a strong focus on attracting potential learners to particular education institutions. **Counselling thus runs the risk of being institution-centred rather than client-centred.** The neutral and independent character of the service should be regarded as one of the important quality criteria.

It can also be noted, that availability of guidance services currently depends on the person's labour market status – i.e. if a person is unemployed he may participate in active labour market policy measures and receive guidance services. The Ministry of Education and Science does not distinguish particular target groups in its adults education policy measures, nevertheless the target group of low-skilled/ low educated persons should receive more special attention in education policy.

Implications and recommendations for policy

The interviews and field research point out that the current adult guidance and orientation system tends to be fragmented and not accessible for every adult in need for such services. Policymakers admitted that there **is a low level of cooperation in general among different ministries and other stakeholders in the field of adult guidance.** Policy actors agreed that although Ministry of Education and Science is responsible in theory for improving a low level of lifelong learning, adult education governance framework lacks clarity. This is also true about many current initiatives for adult education and training implemented by different ministries (Economy, Education and Science, Social Security and Labour, Agriculture and others) with European structural support. Interventions are being implemented but there is a lack of their coordination and vision in this process. A possible solution might be the establishment of a central focal institution (or delegating this function to an existing institution) for adult education and adult guidance initiatives. According to the Law on Adult Non-formal and Continuing Education (2014), in each municipality adult education coordinator institutions were assigned. On the policy level, it can be recommended that **the development of**

adult guidance and orientation services at the local level should be included into their agendas, and monitoring of their implementation should be performed.

It can be surmised from this evaluation study that guidance is insufficiently integrated into adult education. It would be beneficial to have **an agreement for a long-term vision in adult education, including the agreement on the position of guidance services**, so as to avoid fluctuations in policy priorities depending on the change of Ministers' cabinet.

It is also very important to **guarantee regular funding** (either from national or municipal budgets) for the provision of adult guidance services. Generally speaking, guidance initiatives are funded on a project basis; this decreases the sustainability of results and impedes further development of partnerships, tools and counsellors' competences.

The GOAL experience, especially speaking about VJLTMC, showed a mutual benefit gained from **partnership with Public Employment Services** where PES acted both as a service contracting authority and as a referring institution. Due to the fragmented nature of guidance services in GOAL sites it was challenging to establish new partnerships, especially with municipal level institutions (e.g. municipal welfare services). The GOAL experience also showed **under-exploited opportunities for partnerships with the NGO sector**. Policy actors confirmed that NGOs could play a major role in referring clients to counselling staff in educational institutions, if educational institutions were motivated and supported to provide this type of service. Another possibility would be exploring the potential of NGOs in outreach and guidance services. NGOs work with population groups at social risk, and they have a good reputation within local communities. It is likely that investment in the services provided by NGOs would be more cost-efficient than funding regular VET or adult education institutions, which do not have such good access to low-skilled and low-motivated adults. This hypothesis could be tested by future GOAL-type services.

At the moment, data about guidance for unemployed persons is collected only within the employment services system. **In adult education institutions, system-level data is not collected and monitored.** The experience from GOAL, including the positive reaction of programme staff to quantitative data collection instruments, suggests that it would not be an extra burden to collect client data (e.g. about the background of clients, referring institution, session duration and number of sessions, session outcomes). It would also be worthwhile to collect feedback about clients' satisfaction with the sessions and their destinations after guidance (not necessarily from every client), or to promote the importance of such data collection, e.g. to include the indicator about guidance services provision into the annual indicators list that is reported to stakeholders. A simple **data collection system** could be worked out nationally to collect data for the purpose of service quality evaluation and improvement. However, an observation from the employment office has to be taken into account: only the most necessary and useful data should be collected, because entering data into the system takes a considerable amount of time, as does data analysis.

ANNEX

Table B 1. Client reasons for seeking guidance by target group, Lithuania*

		Job- seeker/un employed	Early School Leaver	>50	Employed (& low educated)
To explore educational opportunities	N	39	22	3	5
	% within target group	71	76	30	100
To validate existing competences/prior learning	N	1	4	3	0
	% within target group	2	14	30	0
Interest assessment	N	6	13	6	1
	% within target group	11	45	60	20
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	N	3	8	3	0
	% within target group	5	28	30	
To find financial resources for learning	N	17	3	1	0
	% within target group	31	10	10	
To get assistance with job seeking	N	21	7	4	0
	% within target group	38	24	40	
To get assistance with writing a CV	N	3	5	0	0
	% within target group	5	17	0	
To get information about different institutions and their roles	N	4	5	5	0
	% within target group	7	17	50	
Because of personal issues	N	5	8	4	0
	% within target group	9	28	40	
Other	N	1	1	0	0
	% within target group	2	3	0	

* Data about a client classified as detainee is not included

Table B 2. *'Are the next steps clearer after the counselling session?' by age group, Lithuania*

Age group	Yes		No		Somewhat	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	6	60	1	10	3	30
19-25	13	48	1	4	13	48
26-35	13	50	2	8	11	42
36-55	18	60	1	3	11	37
56-65	4	57	-	-	3	43
Total	54	54	5	5	41	41

Table B 3. *'Did the counselling help you to plan what you want to do next?' by age group, Lithuania*

Age group	Yes		No		Somewhat	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	6	60	1	10	3	30
19-25	13	48	1	4	13	48
26-35	13	50	2	8	11	42
36-55	18	60	1	4	11	37
56-65	4	57	0	0	3	43
Total	54	54	5	5	41	41

Table B 4. *'Are you more motivated after the counselling session?' by age group, Lithuania*

Age group	Yes		No		Somewhat	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	8	80	0	0	2	20
19-25	21	78	2	7	4	15
26-35	18	69	1	4	7	27
36-55	20	67	1	3	9	30
56-65	7	100	-	-	-	-
Total	74	74	4	4	22	22

Table B 5. *'Do you think you will follow up on the advice given by the counsellor?' by age group, Lithuania*

Age group	Yes		No		Maybe	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	7	70	-	-	3	30
19-25	14	52	-	-	13	48
26-35	14	54	-	-	12	46
36-55	18	60	1	3	11	37
56-65	6	86	-	-	1	14
Total	59	59	1	1	40	40

Table B 6. *'Are you more aware now of your education and training options?'* by age group, Lithuania

Age group	Yes		No		Somewhat		Did not discuss	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	5	50	-	-	4	40	1	10
19-25	17	63	-	-	7	26	3	11
26-35	17	65	-	-	9	35	-	-
36-55	20	67	1	3	9	30	-	-
56-65	4	57	-	-	2	27	-	14
Total	63	63	1	1	31	31	4	4

Table B 7. *'Are you more aware now of your job options?'* by age group, Lithuania

Age group	Yes		No		Somewhat		Did not discuss	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and under	4	40	2	20	4	40	-	-
19-25	9	33	1	4	15	56	2	7
26-35	11	42	-	-	11	42	4	15
36-55	15	50	1	3	13	43	1	3
56-65	4	57	-	-	3	43	-	-
Total	43	43	4	4	46	46	7	7