National Evaluation Report

Iceland

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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	Definition
Adult basic skills	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.
Educational- and vocational counsellor	According to Icelandic law (nr.35/2009) guidance counsellors need a licence to practice and a certified counsellor training. The law further states the purpose and duties of the counsellors.
Educational and vocational guidance	The main object of the education and vocational guidance in Iceland is to strengthen individual awareness about their talent, attitude and interest. The guidance is meant to help people of all ages, every social status and in any circumstances realise their strengths, interest and competences so that available opportunities in career- or educational development will become obvious.
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.

In the Icelandic Adult Education Act, validation of prior learning is defined as an organised process applied to evaluate formally the general knowledge and competences of an individual. The evaluation may be based on the individual's education, work experience, vocational training, leisure courses, adult education, social activities, and life experience's defined by law in Iceland. It is an organized process where all acquired knowledge is evaluated in a formal way. The evaluation can include experience gained through education, employment (paid/unpaid), internships, recreational experience, adult learning, social work and other life events. |

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

ETSC

The Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC) is owned by the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ), the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA), the Federation of State and Municipal Employees (BSRB), the Ministry of Finance and the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland. In connection with the collective agreement between ASI and SA in December 2001, the Icelandic government issued a statement of intent which led to the establishment of FA. Operations began in 2003.

EQM

European Quality Mark is a quality assurance mark for all providers of non-formal learning throughout Europe. It is a system for quality assuring non-formal learning providers and their activities, services and work. EQM measures how effectively the organisation understands what systems and activities are required to provide and support quality learning in relation to the European standards for quality assurance of adult learning.

Executive Summary

This report presents the Icelandic findings from 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 (covering Wave 1 only) 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 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 education and training. Each of the six partner countries was piloting new guidance models to specific target groups within the low-educated adult population. Five intervention strategies were being implemented:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations are being established or improved.

2. **High-quality tools** are being developed which will 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 are being defined.

4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population are being developed.

5. **High-quality guidance services** are being provided with the aim of optimising individuals' learning and/or employment outcomes.

Research questions

Four research questions underpin the 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 the evaluation, data were gathered via:

*   client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)

*   client satisfaction and outcome data (user surveys and qualitative interviews)

*   Client follow-up survey (phone-survey after the clients had completed the program)

*   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 program partners.

Dataset

The dataset for Iceland was collected from fieldwork undertaken between February 2016 and April 2017.

The quantitative dataset is comprised of:

*   Monitoring data for 95 clients

*   94 client satisfaction surveys

*   22 service users' follow-up phone survey

*   Four programme staff surveys

The qualitative data set is comprised of interviews and focus group data. Face-to-face individual interviews with two clients (one from each program site); two focus groups with four programme staff each; two focus groups, one with four programme partners and two representing policymakers, the other with four program partners and three representing policymakers.

Challenges

In Iceland, the main methodological challenge had to do with recruiting clients. A great deal of emphasis was placed on using the GOAL programme to reach a group of people that had been inactive and extremely difficult to reach in the past. This task proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The target number of 100 service users was not met and the number of participants ended up being 95. Lack of commitment and 'readiness' among service users posed a great outreach challenge and resulted in many no-shows and dropouts for the GOAL guidance. The service users had in most cases serious issues, e.g. anxiety, poor financial situations, substance abuse and various learning difficulties and disabilities that formed barriers to participation in education.

The quantitative data is mostly used descriptively and should be seen as exploratory and indicative. Despite measures taken to avoid social desirability in the client satisfaction survey, it is likely that social desirability is present in some client responses, which should be kept in mind when analysing the results of this instrument. The GOAL sample is not random so inferences are not drawn to a wider group of people than those that participated in GOAL. Even so, the conclusions give solid insight into the circumstances of the target group, and provide implications for policy changes that could enhance the effectiveness of service provided to the target group. The conclusions also provide important implications for future program development.

Findings

Program participants and stakeholders

The majority of the service users in GOAL were early school leavers. Most of them were female and fell within the age group 26-35. The majority of clients were citizens of Iceland. Most of the clients had completed primary education. Most of the service users were involved in some learning but only a few were working towards a qualification. A large majority had a positive outlook towards learning new things and wanted to improve their skills in general. Most of the clients were unemployed.

The GOAL clients that had greater amount of formal education (i.e. post-secondary education, tertiary education) were all within the target group Migrants/Refugee/Asylum-seeker. These clients were likely to experience barriers because of lack of skills in the native language and systemic obstacles that stem from the fact that the formal educational system in Iceland does not recognize all formal education and qualifications gained in other countries.

In Iceland there were two GOAL intervention sites, one in the southwest area and one in the capital, Reykjavík. In total five counsellors worked on the project. Three counsellors stayed with the program from the beginning to the end, but one counsellor changed jobs after the first wave of the project and was replaced by another counsellor. The counsellors were all female and ranged in age from 32 to 55 years old. All of the GOAL counsellors were university educated and participated in professional development or training activities relevant to their guidance and counselling roles. The counsellors had all worked in adult counselling for at least a year before participating in the project.

GOAL Guidance Service

The majority of clients were referred to GOAL by (un)employment services. The most common reason for seeking guidance was the exploration of educational opportunities. Most sessions were in the form of a face-to-face individual interview. The length of the sessions varied from 10-180 minutes. The counselling sessions usually focused on learning, employment, qualifications and/or other issues. Other issues, then those that had to do with learning or employment, were very frequently discussed during counselling sessions in Iceland. The reason was the difficult and challenging set of circumstances/barriers that most of the Icelandic service users faced.

Many clients were interested in finding links between personal interests and occupational/educational opportunities. The clients that had longer formal education were more likely to seek assistance with job seeking. The service users with shorter formal education were more likely to want to explore educational opportunities. Most younger clients wanted to explore educational opportunities while most of the older clients wanted to get assistance with job-seeking.

The target group in the GOAL project in Iceland was very challenging and most of the service users had limited work history. Many of them had a psychological diagnosis or learning difficulties and disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia), some of them had a long history of drug abuse, and many had severe health issues, whether mental, physical or social, or some combination thereof. The GOAL programme staff in Iceland felt that due to these complex issues many of the service users were not ready to take courses at this stage, and these issues needed to be dealt with first or at least simultaneously if they were to be able to participate in adult learning. The immigrants in the project did not face the same barriers as the natives. They had other problems that derived from lack of language skills and challenges in connection with integrating into a new and unfamiliar society.

According to the counsellors, most clients had negative feelings towards education and schooling and experienced anxiety related to performance in general. A large part of their guidance involved self-esteem and confidence building and motivating the clients to take action. Due to the vulnerability of the GOAL target group, confidentiality, trust, sincerity and understanding was of utmost importance. It was also necessary to adjust the conversation and the tasks that were undertaken during the sessions. The fact that the guidance sessions in the GOAL project were in general longer than regular guidance sessions could indicate that clients liked the positive attention and wanted to share their experience. Many GOAL clients lacked initiative and needed a detailed action plan concerning next steps. According to the counsellors, sessions should not be too far apart, lest clients lose motivation and interest.

The clients were generally very pleased with the guidance and felt more motivated after the first session. This first session with the client involved a lot of data collection, which counsellors felt functioned as a kind of a needs analysis; this type of sessions were longer and more thorough than traditional guidance sessions. While counsellors collected the data, they simultaneously connected different needs and interests to a possible action plan. They also discussed with the clients what they hoped to achieve or gain during the programme. According to the program staff, an important part of the first interview was the process of gaining trust and getting closer to the clients.

The counsellors experienced support from their managers at the programme sites. The project fitted well with other organisational remits even though the guidance was in some ways different from traditional educational and vocational guidance sessions (i.e. the research element of the project, longer and more thorough sessions, different target group and outreach measures).

Partnership and Networks

The formation of partnerships took time, but went well and all parties were very pleased with the increased collaboration. The slight overlaps between services offered did not cause problems across services providers, thanks to good communication between GOAL and partner organisations, and the good will of all parties. The sharing of knowledge and experience promoted mutual learning and benefitted everyone. The programme partners, policymakers and programme staff think that further implementation of a formalised collaborative network is desirable and could benefit everyone involved, especially the target group. The main challenge has to do with the next steps of formalising a cross-organisational network across the different institutions and systems that are involved with the target group. Such an endeavour requires comprehensive policymaking within and amongst the relevant sectors. The absence of the healthcare system within these collaborative partnerships is possibly reducing the potential success of the service and creating barriers. Policymakers could initiate and steer the process of connecting systems (e.g. healthcare-, welfare-, educational-, and employment system) that would facilitate service to more vulnerable groups in the future.

Attempts were made to form a collaboration with large manufacturing companies during the GOAL project. The aim was to offer low-qualified employees, with little formal education, participation in the project. Nothing came of these attempts, as support from upper management levels was lacking. One of the future challenges will be to form an effective connection between the adult learning system and the company sector in Iceland. The creation of incentives within the private sector, that motivate managers to encourage their employees to participate in adult guidance and increase their qualifications, needs to be looked into by policy makers.

Networks are more readily formed now due to the building of bridges during the GOAL project. Relevant organisations are more aware of each other's roles and the services offered by the LLL-centres. Organisational borders are not as prominent and mutual interest has developed for extensive interdisciplinary cooperation aimed at strengthening service for the target group. Most of the service users in GOAL had complicated personal issues that created a barrier for them to commit to further learning. This implies the need for a holistic guidance service that takes into account the many complex issues and external factors faced by the target group. A network of different specialists, with an effective referral system between them, could create the necessary cooperation that is a prerequisite for the development of a holistic guidance service.

Counsellor Competences

Educational- and vocational counsellors in LLL centres assist people in identifying their strengths and then identifying appropriate routes for ongoing competence development. The job title 'Educational- and vocational counsellor' is licensed in Iceland. A job description and ethical guidelines are in place on a national level for career counsellors, developed by the Association of Career Counsellors. Those

have been based on, for example, International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance. All the GOAL counsellors were university educated. They had all worked in adult counselling for at least a year prior to the GOAL project and all of them had engaged in personal development and training each year. According to the counsellors, their superiors have been very supportive about them engaging in an ongoing competence development and training. Since general competence profiles existed for career counsellors in Iceland already, there was a specific need to look into competences linked to servicing the more vulnerable groups in the GOAL project. That includes dealing with the high level of personal hindrances that influence client decision making and clients' ability to progress in their educational/vocational development.

The GOAL project itself influenced competence development among the counsellors. According to them, they are now more capable of providing guidance to vulnerable adults. The challenges and barriers faced by the target group increased the need for adaptability, flexibility and open-mindedness on the part of the counsellors. The counsellors had to look at the clients' issues and resources from many different perspectives, connecting needs with the appropriate tools quickly and effectively. This often required them to use different approaches and interview techniques. Training in that area, during the GOAL project, was very beneficial (i.e. Motivational Interviewing Technique, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)) and greatly influenced their competence development.

According to the counsellors, one of the main challenges in the GOAL project was the recognition of professional boundaries. Many of the personal issues that the target group dealt with went beyond the scope of educational- and vocational guidance. In those cases, it became necessary to refer the service users to other specialists. Extensive knowledge and overview of the services offered by other stakeholders greatly affects counsellors' competence in delivering high quality services to vulnerable adults. According to the counsellors, the steering group meetings and collaboration in the GOAL project contributed significantly to their understanding of the support system as a whole.

Sometimes the counsellors had to face the fact that their influence on their clients' actions was limited by the clients' willingness and capabilities. The appropriate 'readiness' to take the next step in education and/or employment comes from within; and changing that can take allot of effort. The presence of structural hindrances and lack of resources was also sometimes a challenge for the counsellors. For example, there were instances when the client was ready and willing to take the next step but lacked the financial means and/or structural support needed to do so (i.e. courses were too expensive, no scholarships/funds/subsidies provided by the government), or the appropriate courses were not available at the time or in the area were the client could attend them.

The regulations concerning the job title 'Educational- and vocational counsellor' help to ensure competences and facilitate effective service. Training and lifelong learning among counsellors is important and should enjoy continued support. As the findings suggest, the sharing of knowledge and expertise between professionals helped to build competences and was highly beneficial to counsellors (and thus to service users). This suggests that the creation of a mutual forum with regular meetings where dialogues can take place between specialists could be extremely valuable. The opportunity for peer-learning, the sharing of experience and concerns, creates support and contributes to ongoing competence development.

Guidance tools

In Iceland, guidance counsellors generally use typical educational- and vocational guidance tools such as different interviewing techniques, interest inventories, portfolio work/CV, information giving, and various exercises linked to self-knowledge, information gathering and decision making, goal setting, VARK (i.e. survey that explores the client´s learning habits), exploration of occupational values, time management and validation of prior learning. The overall aim regarding tools and methods was to identify effective tools, adjust them as needed and train the counsellors in using them as the needs of the target group became apparent.

Establishing a method group with stakeholders that interact with the target group on regular basis was very effective, particularly in regards to identifying best practice tools for the GOAL target group. The sharing of knowledge and experience was highly valued by the counsellors. Tools that are used during educational- and vocational guidance on a regular basis were successfully used with minor adjustments.

As discussed earlier, the guidance counsellors received training in using new tools that were believed to be effective when working with the target group (e.g. Motivational Interviewing Technique, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)). According to the counsellors, these additions were highly beneficial especially the Motivational Interviewing Technique. Group counselling offers were developed on both program sites and used successfully.

In light of increasing numbers of immigrants using the service, there is an urgent need for increased access to interpreters' services. Analysing and setting competence criteria and ethical standards for interpreting services is necessary. Translation and adjustment of various tools is needed.

Outreach

In Iceland, GOAL was focused on reaching out and bringing outreach to adults who had not previously engaged in educational-, training and employment guidance. This demanded an outreach strategy very different from traditional means of outreach at the programme sites, where clients usually seek guidance of their own accord. Although contact routes existed, there was a need to improve these and to improve visibility and accessibility, so that the service would not be lost and would be understood by clients and partners alike. There have been various collaborations among different partners in the past, that have promoted adult guidance services and increased demand. The guidance has been offered both within companies and at the LLL-centres around the country. But collaboration has been fragmented and informal, and based more on individual interest and knowledge than on a systematic approach. There is a need for formalised cooperation, especially since outreach to the most vulnerable groups, i.e. those that have the least amount of formal education, has been rather unsuccessful.

In the beginning of the project, the aim was to cooperate with trade unions and companies in Iceland and deliver guidance to low-qualified workers that were employed by them. The attempts that were made were unsuccessful. The HR departments were usually interested, but often there was not enough interest when the idea reached executives higher in the hierarchy. In the end, companies

found the process too demanding and were reluctant to take part. Since cooperation with companies was not established, the solution was to focus on collaboration with partner organisations: PES, Social Services and Rehabilitation Centres. This resulted in an effective referral process, but at the same time meant that the service users were a more disadvantaged group (e.g. with more personal issues) than was anticipated at the start of the program. Therefore, the service users' readiness and perseverance was often lacking. Many service users had number of complex, inter-related issues that made it difficult for the programme staff to motivate them to participate in the project. Issues such as various learning difficulties and disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia), financial troubles, drug addiction and other social-, physical- and/or psychological problems were common among clients. These problems deeply affected their ability to commit to the project, and posed an enormous outreach challenge. During the project the counsellors spent a lot of time 'chasing' after clients with the intent of maintaining them within the project. No-shows and dropouts, without any explanation, were frequent.

The 'reaching into organisations' proved to be the most effective way to recruit participants. The adult educational system did not seem to be the most effective way of reaching out to the group. Therefore, a vast majority of the clients in the GOAL project were referred to the counselling by cooperative organisations and institutions that were already servicing the target group. So, even though it took time, forming a referral system based on collaboration with relevant partner organisations worked well and proved to be the most effective way to reach the GOAL target group.

Outreach services could possibly be stronger, with more top-down policy support and cooperation regarding identification of efficient services and partnerships for the target group. It was, for example, challenging to get into companies – managers must become interested in the potential benefits of guidance in order to open this pathway to potential service users. Getting them interested proved too much of a challenge for counsellors; extra effort is needed from higher levels. For example, policy may be able to provide incentives for employers to invest in their staff by working with projects such as GOAL. Another potential way of addressing this problem is the development of a job role for someone in the counselling service to work specifically on company recruitment.

Through effective collaboration, the GOAL project has highlighted the need for a cross-organisational referral system. The advice and assistance provided by the steering group were highly beneficial. As a result of the GOAL project, interest and willingness was generated among counsellors and other stakeholders to create a formal collaboration and referral system between relevant partners. A formalised referral system is more likely to maintain referral routes and enhance their effectiveness. The system could ensure that clients within the target group would be referred to educational- and vocational guidance when they have reached the necessary 'readiness' (there might be a need to reinforce the ability to identify the appropriate readiness for learning- or career development among referral agents). Developing such a system would require a joined-up policy approach.

Service outcomes

The service users that participated in GOAL were in most cases pleased with the guidance, judging by the satisfaction survey and the follow-up survey. They thought the guidance was motivating and helpful, and felt that it supplied them with useful information. They also felt the counsellors were dedicated to helping them, competent and professional. The clients experienced difficult circumstances and in most cases lacked the 'readiness' that was needed to improve their situation and thus achieve measurable outcomes such as enrolment in adult education courses. Even so, there were positive (often smaller) outcomes. The main strengths in terms of service user's outcomes was increased motivation and confidence within the group. Many clients have begun working towards their competence development – be it personal or professional.

For most clients, self-efficacy remained the same or improved. It should be noted that the overall self-efficacy score among the clients was rather high in the beginning creating a ceiling effect in terms of the possibility for improvement. Their attitudes to learning improved and they were more aware of their learning/career goals after the GOAL guidance. In the follow-up survey a vast majority of participants said the guidance had increased their confidence in achieving their goals and most of them had achieved their aims during the counselling, fully or partially. The immigrants within the project were very grateful for the help and the information they got. They felt the counsellors were eager to help them. They were also proportionally more likely to have completed all planned guidance sessions, which might imply higher level of readiness within that group and different needs and/or hindrances.

Even if most clients lacked the necessary readiness to take advantage of opportunities for educational- or career development, counsellors felt that they had planted seeds that the clients would be able to grow in the future should they reach the appropriate level of readiness. Pushing people that are not ready can bring out undesired outcomes. Finding out where the service users are in terms of readiness and taking the guidance from there, in a patient and considerate way, is the most important lesson counsellors learned in connection to service users' outcomes. Another important lesson learned was that despite increased access to quality guidance services and high levels of counsellor competence, lack of available financial resources (e.g. scholarships, subsidy of learning expenses) created a structural barrier when the clients reached the appropriate level of readiness to take the next steps.

Stakeholders (e.g. partner organisations) felt the project brought about positive outcomes. The increased cooperation brought about by the GOAL project had positive effects on service users. Interest and willingness for continued cooperation has generated. However, stakeholders expressed concerns about raising hopes that could not be met due to structural barriers i.e. lack of financial resources and appropriate educational pathways for the target group.

Important outcomes in the GOAL project were at the systemic level, particularly in terms of counsellors' increased competence and the development of collaborative partnership and networks that provide different services, but are collaborative and integrated overall in the sense that they have the same overarching aim of addressing the client's needs and improving his/her circumstances.

The increased collaboration between different organisations increases the possibility of providing a holistic and well-integrated set of services that address the complex, inter-linked needs of vulnerable adults. More cooperation on policy level/ministry level could aid the building of a formalised network and the crossing of institutional borders. Policy making needs to be focused on working towards holistic services for the target group.

The target group needs deeper guidance including a focus on their readiness; this requires that funding is available for longer and more frequent counselling sessions. Appropriate educational/career pathways and suitable financial resources need to be available. Lack of readiness also implies that patience is needed by policy makers regarding service user outcomes. Improving outcomes for vulnerable adults will require a long-term vision that involves development of counsellor competences, organisational partnerships, and structural support (i.e. funding) that will allow clients to enrol on further education and/or training programs. Systemic developments could increase the likelihood of clients taking the initial 'small' steps required to develop greater confidence, agency and control, which are a necessary prerequisite for taking subsequent, larger steps such as enrolling in adult education courses.

Service quality

The establishment of an advisory committee set the stage for information sharing between service providers linked to the target group. The information sharing was of great value for setting up connections between stakeholders and cooperative partnerships. Improved cooperation has led to more knowledge, for everyone involved, about available resources for the target group; this increased the quality of the service provided in GOAL and hopefully future guidance services. The method group was established to identify useful tools and methods. Career counsellors received additional training in using new methods. The training was effective in building competences suitable to the target group. The cooperative partnerships and the counsellors' training directly improved the counsellors' competences and indirectly improved service quality.

The information exchange that took place through the advisory committee and the method group provided valuable learning. Increased knowledge of the target group was beneficial to all stakeholders and enhanced service quality. Through GOAL, partnerships were strengthened. The Program partners and other stakeholders share a willingness to formalise and develop the partnership further, with the aim of working towards a more holistic high-quality service for the target group.

The sharing of knowledge, experience and effective methods/tools between different professionals that service the target group and its positive overall effect on competence development, service quality and outcomes, has implications on the policy level. There are policy and institutional borders that need to be discussed and addressed and it is important to overcome the influence of policy silos, in which the focus is not the whole individual but different policy areas. It takes a lot of effort to get people joined together to create holistic high-quality services and a lot of commitment on behalf of policy makers. Lack of available financial resources can decrease the quality of the service by limiting

options and opportunities for the service users. Service users' feedback obtained on regular bases can shed light on what works and what is needed to maintain or enhance quality services.

Counsellors, program partners and other stakeholders expressed worries about raising client expectations in the face of resource scarcity. This highlights an important policy issue: one role of policy is to increase individual agency and raise human capital; however, a complementary policy responsibility is to support the development of systems that enable individuals to act on their agency and take advantage of (and further develop) their human capital. The target group needs deeper guidance including a focus on their readiness; this requires that funding is available for longer and more counselling sessions. Financial resources and appropriate learning-/career pathways need to be in place and be attainable. The GOAL project has shown that offering high quality service is unlikely to bring about the desired outcomes if there is lack of funding and structural support.

Table 1 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, there are 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, overall service quality and policy interest/support are also addressed. The latter is a key factor in determining future programme sustainability.

Table 1 Summary of the Quality of Different Aspects of the GOAL Programme in Iceland

ASPECT OF PROGRAMME OR POLICY		LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT
Partnerships and networks	*Start of GOAL*	_____x_____ 1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
		There were some relatively longstanding partnerships in place, but they were informal and the partners themselves did not have a good understanding of the importance of adult guidance or the potential added value of GOAL. Also, they were worried about GOAL 'coming into their territory' or taking away some of their future funding opportunities.
	End of GOAL	_____x_____ 1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
		By the final year of the programme, partners were much more receptive to the importance of guidance in general and to the role of GOAL in meeting the particular needs of the target group. However, employers never committed to the project, and the partnership network remained informal – it did not get embedded into the formal policy structure.
Counsellor competences	*Start*	_____x_____ 1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
		The counsellors in the GOAL project all have a university degree in the subject. Quality standards exist and training and networking is in place as well as

		opportunities for lifelong learning, but there was a need for an introduction to methods and tools especially useful for the target group of the project as well as expanded networking with other specialists.	
	End	_____x___ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		Counsellors had discussions with specialists in the method group (social services and PES) and went through training in motivational interviewing as well as in using the Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) tool. The project itself as an arena for learning has increased counsellor competences.	
Outreach	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		Reaching out to the target group identified in GOAL had been very challenging. The group was not responding to outreach measures such as field visits (companies and other) and advertisements.	
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		Through established partnerships (which took some time), processes for referrals were developed which worked in many cases, but it needs to be noted that there were a lot of "no shows" for scheduled interviews. There is a need for refining the referral process in cooperation with specialists from other stakeholders. There is also a need to identify ways to establish partnership with employers/companies. Personal, financial and systematic barriers need to be addressed.	
Tools	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		Various tools existed and counsellor's competences were in place professionally as a base for servicing the new target group.	
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		Counsellors got an opportunity to adjust existing tools, develop group counselling measures for the target group and received training in motivational interviewing and in using the Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI). These methods and tools have added to their expertise regrading guiding the GOAL target group (vulnerable groups – job seekers, social welfare).	
Overall service quality (holistic judgement)	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		The quality of the career guidance delivered was high although not many services were being provided to this target group at the LLL centres. A lot of services were in place, however, through the PES, social services and other actors focusing on personal issues. The focus there is not always directly on	

		educational/competence development. Outreach measures were not as successful as expected. More cooperation needed between stakeholders.
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Cooperative partnerships have been strengthened through sharing of information and knowledge towards a common understanding of the current situation. Partnerships need to be formalized and clear processes for cooperation (e.g. referrals) need to be developed. The aim should be holistic services for the user through common efforts.
Policy interest and/or support	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		There was a lack of discussion and policy making linked to joint cooperation on educational guidance for vulnerable groups – a link between service providers and educational opportunities.
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		There is more understanding regarding the different roles of stakeholders in forming successful partnerships. Interest and commitment has generated towards structuring the system based on common policy making. The results of planning and structuring policy will be based on the efforts of key policy makers.

Conclusions

In regards to the intervention strategies, expectations were either met fully or partially. The expectations in regards to **establishing and/or strengthening of cooperative partnerships and networks was partially met.** The reason being that all collaborations that were established or strengthened during GOAL are still informal. The identification of **effective tools and methods** with the help of the method group was extremely valuable and exceeded expectations. The GOAL project's contribution to overall **counsellor's competence development** fully met expectations. Expectations in regards to **Outreach** were partly met, but not fully. Expectations regarding cooperation with companies and the delivering of guidance to low-qualified workers were not met. Cooperative partners proved to be extremely helpful with outreach, by referring potential service users to the GOAL guidance. Representatives in the Advisory group were very committed to the project. Expectations regarding **high quality guidance services** were met in most ways. The increased collaboration between relevant partners, the identification and use of effective tools and methods, development of group counselling measures, longer interviews with focus on the client's needs and circumstances all, directly or indirectly, contributed to service quality. Lack of financial resources were the main hindrance in providing high quality guidance services to vulnerable adults.

Regarding future program development, a clear and unambiguous definition of the target group is likely to facilitate recruitment and promote efficient collaboration amongst partners. The lack of willingness to cooperate among companies suggests that **agreements regarding collaboration, commitment and partnerships should be in place at the early stages of program development, in**

order to maximise the efficiency of outreach efforts. All future programme developments will need to make realistic estimates of the extent of resources needed to bring clients to the programme. **When developing a high quality service for a target group with highly complex needs, every aspect of the service/programme must take those needs into account.** Therefore, a system of referrals between specialists (e.g. social worker, financial advisor, psychologist, physical therapist, educational- and vocational counsellors) is needed if the aim is to meet the client's needs and provide high quality services. The **approach needs to be holistic** and focus on the individual and his circumstances as a whole, rather than on a specific topic, e.g. job vs learning. **Service users' feedback** obtained on regular bases could shed light on what works and what is needed. Future programs need to be aware of the importance of **service user's readiness**. **Ethical issues need to be addressed**; it is not ethical to build hopes and expectations among service users if these are impossible to fulfil due to structural barriers.

The experience from the GOAL project revealed that there is a **lack of policy and networking within the field of educational- and vocational guidance and other guidance support services linked to the GOAL target group**. Services are offered in various settings, based on different policies and legal frameworks. They are in many cases not connected, which leads to a fragmented system for the individual. **There is a lack of transparency** on links between the adult educational system and the formal educational system in Iceland which makes transition between systems complicated and ambiguous for clients. The lack of financial means and transparency affects the quality of the service. **Policymaking linked to joint cooperation on educational guidance for vulnerable groups is lacking.** The link between service providers and educational opportunities is fragmented. **Institutional borders can create a barrier**. There is a need for more collaboration between ministries. **The absence of a connection with the healthcare system** is possibly reducing the potential success of the service for the target group and creating barriers. **Lack of financial resources** (e.g. scholarships, student loans, payment distribution, subsidy of learning expenses) make it difficult for the target group to take advantage of educational opportunities; this forms a **large hindrance within the adult educational system at the policy level**. That also applies to the lack of appropriate educational pathways and support for more vulnerable groups. There is increased quality focus and co-operation between the Educational and Training Service Centre (ETSC) and Lifelong Learning centres on the basis of the European Quality Mark accreditation system. Specific standards for career guidance services are being developed and tested in the context of the EQM. This contributes to the delivery of high quality guidance.

The target group needs **deeper guidance including a focus on their readiness**; this requires that funding is available for longer and more frequent sessions for the group. Appropriate educational/career pathways and suitable financial resources need to be available to the service users. **The issue of funding and subsistence among adult learners needs to be addressed within governmental policymaking.** Most adults have financial commitments and can't afford loss of income while studying. This creates a serious system barrier that needs urgent attention at the highest policy levels. **Training and lifelong learning among counsellors is important and should enjoy continued support**.

In light of the increasing number of immigrants using the service of the LLL-centres and other guidance services, **the need for interpretation services has increased** and is likely to increase even more in the future. It is important to analyse and set competence criteria and ethical standards for interpretation services. The translation and adjustment of various guidance tools needs attention.

The **creation of an efficient and formal referral system** between professionals is needed. The system could ensure that clients within the target group would be referred to Educational- and Vocational Guidance when they have reached the necessary 'readiness'. Lack of readiness also implies that **patience is needed on the part of policy makers with regard to service user outcomes**. There is a need for policy to support the expansion of existing networks to include more actors and cooperation aiming at the needs of the target group, i.e. a more holistic career guidance service.

Joint policymaking on behalf of the Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and Ministry of Industries and Innovation can initiate and steer the process of connecting systems. Outreach services could possibly be stronger where there is **top-down assistance** and cooperation at the policy level regarding identification of efficient services and partnerships for the target group.

Policy may be able to provide incentives for employers to invest in their staff by working with projects such as GOAL. The development of a job role for someone in the counselling service to work specifically at company recruitment could be one way of addressing this.

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 Slovenia[1]. 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 Iceland. 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 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.

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[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

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 2015[3] - 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.

In Iceland the evaluation team had three members:

- **Lára Rún Sigurvinsdóttir** is a project manager at the Educational Research Institute, School of Education, University of Iceland (UI). Lára is the main project manager for the GOAL project

for the UI and her strength lies in her knowledge of methodology in Social Sciences. Her role in the project is to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data, and reporting. Her role also includes supervision of the project for the university and to be the main contact person.

- **Sigríður Kristín Hrafnkelsdóttir** is a project manager at the Educational Research Institute, School of Education, University of Iceland (UI). Her role in the evaluation is to gather and analyse qualitative data jointly with Lára.

- **Kristín Erla Harðardóttir** is the director of the Educational Research Institute, School of Education, University of Iceland (UI). Her role in the project is to offer support and guidance in the evaluation process.

1.3   Project GOAL in Iceland

Context

The main objective of education and vocational guidance in Iceland is **to strengthen individuals' awareness of their talents, attitudes and interests**. The guidance is meant to help people of all ages, of every social status and in any circumstances realise their strengths, interests and competences so that the available opportunities in career or educational development will become clear. In the scope of educational and vocational guidance, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture oversees guidance in the formal school system and has a contract with the **Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC) which provides educational and vocational guidance to low-educated adults**. The ETSC cooperates with 14 Lifelong Learning (LLL) Centres which provide guidance to this target group through coordinated efforts. Lifelong Learning Centres in Iceland create opportunities, provide programmes, courses, support and counselling in their particular geographical region. They co-operate with schools at upper secondary and higher education level and with municipalities, employers' and employees' organisations and private enterprises. **It has, however, been a challenge to reach the more vulnerable part of that target group.**

The Ministry of Welfare oversees guidance for job seekers coordinated by the Directorate of Labour in cooperation with nine Public Employment Services (PES) around the country. Both streams (LLL centres and PES) offer services from qualified educational- and vocational counsellors (educated to BA or MA level): **in accordance with legislation, counsellors in Iceland are required to have a licence to practice and certified training.**

The Authorities for Municipalities oversee social counselling for economically inactive people through social services. There are also several local service centres in the Reykjavík area which also provide educational and vocational guidance. In addition, there are various services dealing with the target group, for example, NGOs such as the Red Cross, and Prison Services.

What is evident is that although several services are in place, the key weakness in assessing the needs of low-educated adults in guidance is the fact that there **is only limited data available on this cohort**. There is also a lack of information about the services of the LLL centres for the more vulnerable groups. It has also been a challenge to reach and offer **appropriate educational pathways**

to the target group in the more sparsely populated areas and to have **non-formal courses evaluated into the formal school system**.

Evaluation results from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (2014)[4] indicate that the main barriers to participation in adult learning are lack of time, financial reasons, various learning difficulties and disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia), illnesses, social circumstances, family responsibilities, low self-esteem, lack of support from employers, transportation and shortage of vocational training options.

There is an increasing focus in Iceland on how links between the education system and educational opportunities can be made more successful and on the development of the economy and its requirements for competent employees, whether temporary or permanent. This is based on an understanding that integrated policy formulation and implementation in employment and education benefits individuals, the economy, and society as a whole. **Further development is needed to further establishing cooperative partnerships for sharing of information, mutual learning and organising to the benefits of the target group**. Obtaining national data on the cohort and exploring the role of guidance is also needed.

GOAL programme

Aims

The main objectives of the GOAL project in Iceland were to continue and **improve the cooperation with other organisations which are associated with the target groups** and to share experiences and knowledge between organisations. Improved cooperation and information sharing will lead to increased knowledge of the target groups. The aim was also to **reach more groups through guidance** and to create a stronger connection. One aim was to develop a more focused outreach strategy, to **promote efficacy within the target groups regarding their learning/career development**. GOAL in Iceland aimed to work with the target group to help them take **"one step up"**, by meeting the group and seeing what would be the desirable result (learn about their needs and develop services accordingly).

The aims of GOAL in Iceland were to improve knowledge about the target group of low-qualified, focusing more on the vulnerable groups which have not had the means to use the services of educational guidance in LLL-centres. The focus was on creating partnerships with stakeholders linked to the target group which were presented in the advisory group.

Activities

In terms of the five GOAL intervention strategies, activities in Iceland were:

1) Cooperation with other **organisations and networks** were improved and strengthened.

2) **Tools** which are known to be useful for the target group were used, for example, interview techniques, Interest Inventories, study circle, goal setting. New techniques and tools were

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[4] Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (2014). Úttekt á framhaldsfræðslukerfinu 2009-2013. [Evaluation of the secondary education system 2009-2013]. Reykjavik: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

also used by the counsellors. The counsellors learned how to use new tools (e.g. new interview techniques) by cooperating with other specialists or by taking training courses. Techniques were adjusted accordingly, which lead to a more effective and better organised interviews.

3) The **competences of existing counsellors:** the professional awareness, competences and skills of counsellors were to be increased and linked to the groups that had not been attending and seeking educational and vocational counselling.

4) **Outreach**: Reaching out to those who may have been reluctant towards guidance, where they were (at the location of stakeholders, work or other suitable location) and introduce the benefits of educational and vocational guidance thoroughly with the aim of increasing their self-confidence and knowledge.

5) **Quality guidance services**: The experience of this project will feed into a quality assurance system (EQM) which is currently in development at the ETSC (after the results of Wave 2 are known), as well as general quality issues linked to servicing the target group which will be disseminated to other stakeholders for continuing development. Collaborate with union representatives, organisations and other stakeholders on outreach.

Sites

Two sites in Iceland piloted the GOAL interventions. Both are LLL-centres in the ETSC network which provide guidance to low educated adults among others. One site, **Mimir**, is located in the Reykjavík area; the other, **MSS**, is in a more rural area in the Southern peninsula (Reykjanes town and surrounding area). Although the centres are very similar, the network channels may be closer in the area of MSS than Mimir. Over the years, MSS has faced more challenges in regards to unemployment and social welfare.

Target group

The ETSC has coordinated the educational and vocational counsellor network in the LLL-centres around the country and the target group has been those who are low educated. It has been evident through this experience that there is **a more vulnerable group within the larger target group** that counsellors have had difficulties reaching. The object of the GOAL project was to find ways to approach and connect to that group to a greater extent, to learn about the counselling services of other specialists linked to that group and focus on Improvements of tools, methods and skills related to new target groups of guidance.

1.4   About this report

This is the final GOAL evaluation report for Iceland. 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 Iceland.

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

- Chapter 4 describes the GOAL service in Iceland.

- 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 Iceland and across the six-country project as a whole.

2.1 Evaluation design and methods

Evaluation design

The methodological approach for this evaluation is 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 needed to 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**'[5] approach. Evaluations adopting this approach[6,7] 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 or motivation, and/or heightened ambition. These mechanisms, in turn, may then contribute to client actions and outcomes, such as enrolling on a course.

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[5] 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.
[6] 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.
[7] Weiss, C. (1997). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, *21*, 501–524.

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**[8]. 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 programme[9], including: 1) multi-agency governance and/or implementation; 2) simultaneous causal strands leading to desired outcomes; 3) alternative causal strands leading to desired outcomes; and 4) recursive causality. These four factors are discussed in the following paragraphs.

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[8] Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. SAGE.
9 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

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 this 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**[10]: 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 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 this interim reporting stage, which drew on data collected through 25th of February 2016 until the 8th of April 2016, was to analyse and share early messages in order to facilitate service adaptation and improvement.

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

2.2 Sample

Data was collected from **95 clients** in the GOAL project in Iceland. In total, **93 clients** filled out the satisfaction survey after the first interview. **One client** filled out the satisfaction survey before his/her

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

second interview, and **one service user** did not want to participate in the satisfaction survey. All **95 clients** had an initial interview. During the program, the clients also had subsequent interviews. The number of subsequent interviews differed between clients. A few clients only came for an initial interview and a final interview, but a vast majority of clients had at least one subsequent interview. The most frequent number of subsequent interviews was two and the client that got most subsequent interviews got ten. Exit data was collected for **94 service users**, but **one client** was still receiving counselling when data collection ended the 7th of April **2017**. Twenty-two service users participated in a follow-up phone-survey. Quantitative data were also collected from programme staff via an online survey.

Qualitative data in the GOAL project was collected from **15 people via four focus groups and two face-to-face interviews**. In wave 1 there were two face-to-face interviews, both conducted with clients, one from each programme site. **Two focus groups were conducted during both waves**. In both waves the first focus group consisted of four programme staff members, two from each program site. In both waves the second focus group was made up of representatives from organisations that were programme partners and persons representing policymakers in the field. The participants in both focus groups were largely the same in both waves. In the first focus group, with program staff, one counsellor was replaced by another counsellor during wave 2. In total there have been 5 counsellors working in the GOAL project, but only four simultaneously. In wave 1 there were six participants in the second focus group, four representing program partners and two representing policy makers (one at the governmental and one at the municipal level). In wave 2 there were seven participants in the second focus group, four representing program partners and three representing policymakers (two at the governmental and one at the municipal level). During wave 2 the participants in the second focus group were the same as in wave 1, one person representing policymakers was absent during the wave 1 focus group, but was able to participate in the wave 2 focus group (see table 2.1.).

Table 2-1 Data Collection Sample, By wave, Iceland

Method	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total
Questionnaire monitoring data	21	74	95
Questionnaire client satisfaction survey	21	73	94
Questionnaire follow up survey service users	--	22	22
Questionnaire program staff Interviews service users	4	1	5
Focus group policy makers program partners	6	7	13
Focus group program staff	4	4	8
Interview service users	2		2
Total	58	181	239

2.3 Data collection

All of the data collection instruments were designed and provided by the IOE. They were all in English initially, but were translated into Icelandic by local evaluators prior to their use. All quotes were translated by the author from the original Icelandic.

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.

The data monitoring instrument was used **each time** a client had a guidance session, although not all fields were completed at every session: some fields were relevant for the first session only (entrance data) whereas other fields focused on the last session (exit data). 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 survey[11]. 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, a **follow-up survey** was conducted. 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

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[11] 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.

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.

In Iceland the **follow-up survey** was conducted with 22 service users via a phone-interview. The interviewer asked the participants both closed-ended and open-ended questions and recorded the data simultaneously using the online survey software Qualtrics. Some questions were open-ended and were back-coded into predefined categories after the interview had taken place. The data was analysed using the statistical software SPSS. All the participants had previously given their consent for participating in a follow up survey. The participants had completed their counselling 2-8 months prior to participating in the follow-up survey. There were 33 clients that met the preconditions for participation in the follow-up survey (i.e. had given permission to be contacted for the survey and at least two months had passed since they finished the GOAL guidance when the survey was conducted). Multiple attempts were made to contact these 33 clients in an effort to achieve the target sample of 30 participants. After numerous attempts the final sample size was 22 participants in the follow-up survey. The main challenge with the follow-up survey was recruiting clients. Even though these 33 service users had all given their consent and contact information, they did not answer the phone or e-mails. Some potential participants answered the phone but asked the interviewer to call back later, but then never answered when the interviewer called back.

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 May 2016. The second stage (Wave 2) of qualitative data collection took place in March 2017. By collecting such data in two waves 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.

In Iceland **quantitative data was collected electronically with the online survey software Qualtrics**. During guidance sessions, counsellors filled in the information gathered from clients using an online survey link and a specific individual client number. The structure of the survey was made using the data monitoring template. Different questions were used for the initial interview, subsequent interviews and final/exit interview by means of a display logic. At the start of the session the counsellor recorded if the interview was the client's first, subsequent or final/exit interview. This made the relevant questions for each interview appear in the correct order. Once the session was over the counsellors submitted the survey and the answers were registered automatically and simultaneously made accessible to the local evaluators. **The client satisfaction survey was administered using the same online survey software**, but without the client number. After the first or before second interview clients were shown into a room with a computer, separate from where the interview took place. They took the survey using an anonymous survey link. Assistance was optional and given, if needed, by a staff member at the programme site but not by the counsellor that had just had the session with the client. Once clients had completed the survey they submitted their answers which were then automatically registered and simultaneously made accessible to local evaluators.

Using an online survey link for administering the monitoring data gathering and the satisfaction survey was thought to be optimal for the Icelandic evaluation, it both simplified data collection and registration and also ensured data protection. It was thought that the clients might feel their anonymity would be better protected using an electronic survey, then if they were asked to put their questionnaire into an envelope and then hand it over to a staff member at the programme site where they just had the guidance session.

Quantitative data from programme staff were also collected with an online survey using the survey software Qualtrics. The purpose of this survey was to gather relevant information about the programme staff without taking up time in the programme staff focus group. The program staff survey was administered in the first wave. In the second wave one counsellor was replaced by another and the incoming counsellor also filled out the program staff survey.

The programme staff in Iceland reported that they had **initial concerns about how the use of the Monitoring Data Template could hinder the natural flow of the sessions**. During the focus group the programme staff reported that these concerns were unnecessary. According to them the template was very useful and a good tool for gathering important and detailed information about service users. In their experience the session became more 'deep' with the use of the Monitoring Data Template.

Qualitative data were collected through focus groups (wave 1 and wave 2) and two face-to-face interviews (wave 1). During the program there were four focus groups in total, two in each wave. All focus groups were run by two local evaluators, with one evaluator asking the questions and the other keeping track of time as well as overseeing that all of the relevant questions were being asked. The

focus groups took place at the Educational Research Institute, School of Education, University of Iceland. Both face-to-face interviews were conducted at the client's preferred location with one local evaluator conducting the interview. Topic guides for wave 1 focus groups and the individual face-to-face interviews were provided by IOE and translated by local evaluators. The topic guides for wave 2 focus groups were constructed by local evaluators with guidance from IOE.

Focus groups were the preferred method for gathering information from the programme staff, programme partners and policymakers, as they can be very effective when the need to address multiple topics is more pressing than getting a very deep understanding of the interviewee's experiences. As mentioned earlier one focus group was composed of both programme partners and policymakers. This was done **to stimulate interesting conversations and elicit diverse opinions about the topics. Also, due to the small Icelandic population local stakeholders and policymakers that influence both programme sites are in most cases the same organisations**, or at least they are very connected. Face-to-face interviews were used in an attempt to get a deeper understanding of how the clients were experiencing the GOAL project from their own standpoint.

Anonymity is of utmost importance. In the quantitative data gathering, using the monitoring data template, the counsellor allocated to each client a unique site-specific ID number during the first counselling session. This ID number stayed with the client in all subsequent counselling sessions. The use of unique client identification number allowed for the client-data to be shared anonymously. The satisfaction survey was accessed with an anonymous online survey link. During the first session the clients were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up survey after the guidance had finished. They were also informed that their responses in the follow-up survey would be anonymous and not linkable to other data collected during the GOAL guidance sessions. Therefore, the interviewer did not record any personal information with the participant's responses to the follow-up survey, that could potentially make him/her identifiable. The dialogues in the focus groups and interviews were recorded and then transcribed as soon as possible. During transcription the names of participants and other information that was potentially identifiable was changed or omitted. After transcription the recordings were erased.

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.

Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews were all transcribed and 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.

In Iceland the quantitative data were analysed using the software package SPSS statistics and Excel. The transcriptions made from the interviews and focus groups were analysed using the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti. The data were analysed using mainly thematic analysis around the topic guides provided by the IOE.

2.5 Methodological challenges

In general, data collection in Iceland proved to be easier than expected. Programme staff found the **data monitoring instrument to be very useful** and a good tool for gathering important information. All but one client completed the Client Satisfaction Survey. To minimise social desirability in the responses to the Client Satisfaction Survey the clients were administered the survey in a separate room from where the interview took place. They took the survey on a computer with an anonymous survey link and submitted the answers themselves electronically. Despite these measures, social desirability is likely to be present and that needs to be kept in mind when interpreting results from the Client Satisfaction Survey.

In Iceland the main methodological challenge in the project stemmed from **programme challenges** related to client recruitment and "readiness". In the project plan, considerable emphasis was placed on reaching a group of people that had to date been inactive and extremely difficult to reach. Achieving this proved to be more difficult than anticipated; **not only was it hard to get clients to participate in the project in the first place, but keeping them in the project, after they had agreed to participate and had their initial interview, was also difficult**. Frequently clients booked an interview but did not show up. This happened with first, subsequent and final/exit interviews. This was also a challenge when conducting the follow-up phone survey. Some clients were unreachable through the means of contact that they had initially given the counsellors. They seemed to have "disappeared" after participating in the project. Others were reachable, but asked to be called back at a later time. When the interviewer called back, some these service users didn't answer.

Challenges for counsellors

The main challenge for counsellors in the project had to do with recruitment and "readiness" of the service user. It was both very challenging getting service users to participate in the project and maintaining those that had already agreed to participate, within the project. As a result, **counsellors spent a lot of time 'chasing' clients. Behind every client in the Icelandic data there are countless phone-calls, e-mails and messages.**

Quantitative data challenges

The main quantitative data challenges had to do with difficulties that the counsellors experienced with outreach. The target number of participants in the GOAL project in Iceland was 100 clients, but in the end 95 service users participated in the monitoring data collection. The same is true for the follow-up phone survey. The target number of 30 clients was not reached and in the end 22 service users participated in the follow-up survey. Some clients did not show up for their final/exit interview and the counsellors had to exit them without an interview. Therefore, out of the 95 clients that participated in the program, 31 clients had missing exit data and one client was still receiving counselling at the cut-off date. A new answer option "does not apply" was added to all variables that were to be addressed in the final/exit interview, meaning that the client did not show up. It should be noted that great efforts were made on behalf of the counsellors, to reach these clients for their final interview.

In Iceland considerable emphasis was placed on reaching a group of people that had to date been inactive and extremely difficult to reach. As mentioned before, service users' lack of commitment was one of the main challenges in the GOAL project in Iceland. This became apparent after wave 1. At that stage there were only 21 clients registered in the project, even though the counsellors had gone through great efforts to both obtain new clients and hold on to those that were already within the project. Therefore, a decision was made to expand the definition of the target group. A variable was added to the monitoring data collection to identify if the new client belonged to the initial target group or the expanded target group. As it turns out only 19 service users (20%) belonged to the expanded "easier" target group. The number of clients that belonged to the initial target was 76 (80%). The proportion of service users in the expanded target group turned out to be considerably smaller than expected. According to the counsellors the reason for this was mainly, that **new groups of people entered programs/rehabilitation within partner organisations and that led to many new clients entering the project**. Also, known and established referral connections were more accessible and easier to mobilise than establishing new once (see table. 2.2).

Table 2-2 Does the Client Belong to the Extended Target Group, Iceland?

		N	%
Valid	Yes	19	20
	No	76	80
Total		95	100

To minimise social desirability in the responses to the Client Satisfaction Survey the clients were administered the survey in a separate room from where the interview took place. They took the survey on a computer with an anonymous survey link and submitted the answers themselves electronically. If they needed assistance, it was provided by a staff member at the program site, but not the one that had just taken the interview. Despite these measures, social desirability in responses is not unlikely, and that needs to be kept in mind when interpreting results from the Client Satisfaction Survey. The follow-up survey was a phone-survey and the participants were contacted by

means that they themselves had provided to the counsellors. The participants were told that no personally identifiable information would be listed with their responses to the questions in the follow-up survey. Even so, participants might have felt their anonymity was not secure during the data collection. That might promote social desirability in response.

Qualitative data challenges

The main challenge regarding qualitative data collection was the limited sample size. Only two service users were interviewed. Also, there was a risk of sampling bias in the service user interviews. The counsellors chose the service users themselves and asked them if the evaluator could contact them for an interview. Hypothetically, the counsellors could have chosen someone that they had a nice experience with during the sessions rather than someone that they had a negative experience with. When collecting the qualitative data within focus groups the topic guides proved to be a bit too long and the focus groups were time consuming. The focus groups were supposed to be made up of the same participants during both waves, but minor changes occurred.

Data analysis challenges

The main data analysis challenge had to do with dropout and as a consequence, missing exit data for many clients.

2.6   Key methodological findings

The main methodological finding was that the definition of 'one step up' needs to be expanded when evaluating the results in Iceland. While this is typically considered to refer to a step forward educationally or in employment, or to relate to improvements in aptitudes or attitudes, **such steps are likely to be too challenging for particularly disadvantaged clients, such as those in Iceland.** In Iceland the clients struggled to achieve even basic steps such as showing up for their appointments.

3 Programme Participants and Stakeholders

This chapter provides descriptive data on the GOAL service users and staff in the six participating countries. These data are drawn from quantitative and qualitative data gathered during the length of the program. The intention in this chapter is to develop a picture of: a) the target client group in Iceland, 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 the Icelandic GOAL project, the aim was to provide guidance services to adults that are low-educated, with no or low qualifications, early school leavers, immigrants and/or adults who have a criminal record. One of the aims was to reach individuals that have not been actively involved in programmes within other institutions.

3.1 Service users

Ninety-five service users participated in the GOAL project in Iceland.

Demographic characteristics

Target group
Table 3.1. shows the target groups in the GOAL project in Iceland by wave. The counsellors classified the service users into target groups based on the programme or service type they were using. It was possible for a client to belong to more than one target group, for example, an early school leaver could also be a job seeker. When this happened counsellors chose the main target group based on the programme or service type the clients were using. Thirty-six clients in Iceland were early school leavers (38%), that group was proportionally larger during the first wave. Twenty-six clients were job-seekers/ unemployed (27%) and most of them joined the program during the second wave. Eighteen migrants/refugees or asylum seekers (19%) participated in GOAL, all during the second wave (see table 3.1.).

Table 3-1 Service Users' Target Group By Wave, Iceland

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	3	14	23	31	26	27
Early School leaver	12	57	24	32	36	38
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	0	0	18	24	18	19
Detainee	0	0	1	1	1	1
Over 50	4	19	1	1	5	5
Employed (& low educated)	2	10	7	10	9	10
Total	21	100	74	100	95	100

Gender

More women than men participated in the GOAL project. During the first wave of the project two thirds of clients were men (67%), and one third were women (33%). During the second wave of the

project more women (77%) became part of the service users group then men (23%). Overall more women than men participated in GOAL. Sixty-three women (67%) received counselling and 31 men (33%) (see Table 3.2). This gender profile differs somewhat to that observed in the ETSC generally over the past five years, where the ratio of male to female service users has been more balanced. (In 2015 for example, 56% of those attending sessions with counsellors were male and 44% female). In the case of GOAL, one factor increasing the percentage of women was that there was a large group of foreign women referred to the MSS program site; however, it is not clear whether this was coincidental or not.

Table 3-2 Service Users' Gender, By wave, Iceland

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	7	33	57	77	64	67
Male	14	67	17	23	31	33
Total	21	100	74	100	95	100

Age

The service users in Iceland were all over the age of 18. Nineteen service users (20%) belonged to the age group 19-25 years old. The most common age group was **26-35 years old**: 47 clients (51%) fell within that age band. Twenty-two clients (24%) fell within the age group 36-55 years old. Five of the service users (5%) fell within the age group 56-65 years old. No service user in Iceland belonged to the age group 66 and older (see Table 3.3.). In 2015, half (49%) of ETSC clients were aged between 26 and 40 years old, which is in compliance with the age distribution among GOAL clients. The reason for this is unclear.

Table 3-3 Service Users' Age By wave, Iceland

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
Age band	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 and younger	0	0	0	0	0	0
19-25	0	0	19	0	19	20
26-35	10	48	37	51	47	51
36-55	6	29	16	22	22	24
56-65	5	24	0	0	5	5
66 and older	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21	100	72	73	93	100

Residence and home language

The residence status of all the Wave 1 clients in Iceland was the same. **All were Icelandic citizens and the most commonly spoken language in their homes was Icelandic.** In the second wave of the GOAL project there was an increase in diversity both in the residence status and the language most commonly spoken in their home. Table 3.4, shows the residence status of the GOAL participants. Seventy-four clients (79%) in the project were Icelandic citizen. Thirteen service users (14%) were EU

nationals and five clients (5%) were Non-EU nationals with residence permit. Only one client (1%) was a refugee (see table. 3.4.).

Table 3-4 Service Users' Residence Status, Iceland

	N	%	Valid %
National/citizen	74	78	79
EU national	13	14	14
Non-EU national with residence permit	5	5	5
Refugee	1	1	1
Other	1	1	1
Missing	1	1	0
Total	95	100	100

The most commonly spoken language in the client's home in Iceland was Icelandic. Sixty-one clients (66%) claimed that the most commonly spoken language in their home was Icelandic. Eight clients (9%) said that they spoke Polish most commonly in their home, seven clients (8%) spoke English most commonly in their home. Two clients (2%) spoke Russian most commonly in their home (see table 3.5.).

Table 3-5 Service Users' Most Commonly Spoken Language at Home, Iceland

	N	%	Valid %
Albanian	1	1	1
Croatian	1	1	1
English	7	7	8
English and French	1	1	1
English and Icelandic	3	3	3
English and Polish	1	1	1
Icelandic	61	64	66
Icelandic and Polish	1	1	1
Icelandic and Spanish	1	1	1
Lithuanian	1	1	1
Polish	8	8	9
Portuguese	1	1	1
Russian	2	2	2
Sinhala, Sri Lanka	1	1	1
Somali	1	1	1
Urhobo, Nigeria	1	1	1
Missing	3	3	0
Total	95	100	100

When analysing the target groups by gender it turns out that there was a difference between the sexes. More men (52%) than women (31%) were Early School Leavers. More women (30%) than men (23%) were Job-Seeker/Unemployed. The participants that fell within the target group Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker, were all women. The detainee was male and men were also more likely to be over the age of 50 (see table 3.6).

Table 3-6 Service Users' Target Group By Gender, Iceland

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	19	30	7	23	26	27
Early School leaver	20	31	16	52	36	38
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	18	28	0	0	18	19
Detainee	0	0	1	3	1	1
Over 50	1	2	4	13	5	5
Employed (& low educated)	6	9	3	10	9	9
Total	64	100	31	100	95	100

When analysing the target groups by the service users age it reveals that there are differences between age groups. The majority of the clients in the age group 19-25 years old were Early School Leavers (53%). This was also the case within the age group 26-35 years old (43%). Within the age group 36-55 years old the largest target group was Job-seeker/Unemployed (41%) (see table 3.7.)

Table 3-7 Service Users' Target Group By Age, Iceland

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	6	32	10	21	9	41	1	20	26	28
Early School leaver	10	53	20	43	5	23	1	20	36	39
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	2	11	12	26	3	14	0	0	17	18
Over 50	0	0	0	0	3	14	2	40	5	5
Employed (& low educated)	1	5	5	11	2	9	1	20	9	10
Total	19	100	47	100	22	100	5	100	93	100

Within most age groups, there were more women than men. The only age group that had more males was 56-65 years old (see table 3.8.).

Table 3-8 Service Users' Gender By Age, Iceland

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	12	63	35	75	15	68	1	20	63	68
Male	7	37	12	25	7	32	4	80	30	32
Total	19	100	47	100	22	100	5	100	93	100

Education and employment characteristics

Highest educational level

Clients were asked about the highest level of education that they had completed. Ten clients (11%) had not finished primary education. Fifty-four clients (57%) stated that **primary education was their highest educational level**, five clients (5%) had finished lower secondary education. Eight service users (8%) had finished general upper secondary education and the same number of clients (8%) had finished vocational education. One client (1%) had finished post-secondary education (non-tertiary) and nine service users (10%) had finished tertiary education. According to the counsellors, most of the clients who have finished vocational education are unable to work within their profession because of accidents, or physical or mental conditions, and are therefore in vocational rehabilitation. **Vocational rehabilitation aims to help individuals return to employment following illness or injury.** This process involves expert advice and services in the field of vocational rehabilitation and requires full participation of the individual concerned (see Table 3.9.).

Table 3-9 Service Users' Highest Educational Level, Iceland

	N	%
Not completed primary education	10	11
Primary education	54	57
Lower secondary education	5	5
General upper secondary education (gymnasium)	8	8
Vocational education (upper secondary level)	8	8
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	1	1
Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)	9	10
Total	95	100

Current education and learning

Clients were also asked if they were currently engaged in any kind of education or learning. Perhaps surprisingly, about half of the service users were engaged in education or learning. **Just over half of the clients (56%) were currently engaged in education or learning** at the beginning of their involvement in the GOAL project. Forty-two clients (44%) were not engaged in any kind of education or learning at the start of the project. According to the programme staff **many of the clients are involved in initiatives that are not a part of the formal educational system**. These include various courses that, among other things, aim to prepare individuals to go back to school e.g. how to study with dyslexia, time management and study techniques, self-assertiveness and self-empowerment. These initiatives have been classified as learning in the registration process (see Table 3.10.).

Table 3-10 Service Users' Current Education and Learning, Iceland

	N	%
Yes	53	56
No	42	44
Total	95	100

The clients that were engaged in education or learning were also asked if they were working towards any qualification. As shown in Table 3.11, **most were not working towards any qualification** (81%) with only ten (19%) out of the 53 service users were doing so.

Table 3-11 Service Users' Working Towards a Qualification, Iceland

	N	%
Yes	10	19
No	43	81
Total	53	100

Employment status

The employment status of the service users is important for the GOAL project. **Thirty-five (37%) service users in Iceland were economically inactive (not retired and not actively looking for a job)** at the start of their counselling. Forty-four service users (46%) were unemployed and seeking employment, two clients (2%) were self-employed, seven clients (7%) were employed part-time and seven clients (7%) were employed full-time (see Table 3.12.).

Table 3-12 Service Users' Employment Status, Iceland

	N	%
Employed full-time	7	7
Employed part-time	7	7
Self-employed	2	2
Unemployed	44	46
Inactive (not retired and not actively looking for a job)	35	37
Total	95	100

Previous guidance

Service users were asked if they had previously received career or educational guidance during adulthood. As shown in Table 3.13., **thirty-two clients (34%) had received guidance during adulthood and sixty-two service users (65%) had not**. One service user (1%) did not know if s/he had received career or educational guidance during adulthood (see Table 3.13.).

Table 3-13 Service Users' Previously Received Guidance During Adulthood, Iceland

	N	%
Yes	32	34
No	62	65
Don't know	1	1
Total	95	100

Previous barriers to improving education or career

Counsellors were asked to register what sort of things had stopped the clients from improving their education or career up till now. The service users could state more than one reason. **The most common reason was lack of confidence.** This was a reason for 45 service users (47%). That means

that almost half of the clients in GOAL felt that they had not improved their education or career up until now because of lack of confidence. The second most common reason was cost of education. This was the case for 38 service users (40%). Twenty-eight clients (29%) also thought the reason was lack of motivation Twenty service users (21%) experienced other reasons, then those predetermined on the list. These included depression, anxiety, lack of interest, drug abuse and addiction, lack of computer skills, lack of clear direction and unrealistic goals (see Table 3.14.).

Table 3-14 Service Users' Previous Barriers to Improving Education or Career, Iceland (N=95)

	N	%	% Cases
Lack of confidence	45	11	47
Cost of education or training was too expensive	38	9	40
Lack of motivation	28	7	29
Limited proficiency in country's main language	27	7	28
Learning disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia)	27	7	28
Too busy taking care of family	26	6	27
Health problems	26	6	27
Negative prior experience with schooling	25	6	26
Too busy at work	22	5	23
Other	20	5	21
Lack of support from family	18	4	19
Lack of information about courses	16	4	17
Lack of transport or mobility	16	4	17
Lack of prerequisites (entrance requirements)	15	4	16
Other personal reasons	14	3	15
Courses offered at an inconvenient time/place	13	3	14
Insufficient basic skills	11	3	12
Age	9	2	9
No suitable courses available	8	2	8
Lack of support from employer	4	1	4
Cultural or religious obstacles	2	0	2
Criminal record in the past	1	0	1
I don't want to answer	1	0	1
Total	412	100	434

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.

In Iceland the scores ranged from zero to three. Four clients (5%) scored zero and twelve service users (16%) got one point. Thirteen clients (17%) got two points and forty-seven service users (62%) got three points. The mean score at entry was 2.36 points (see Table 3.15.).

Table 3-15 Service Users' Self-Efficacy When They Entered the GOAL Project (N=76)

Score	N	%	Valid %
0	4	4	5
1	12	13	16
2	13	14	17
3	47	50	62
Total	76	80	100
Missing	19	20	
Total	95	100	

Attitudes to learning

When entering the GOAL project, clients were asked if they liked learning new things. In Iceland the clients had an overall positive outlook on learning new things. Only two clients (2%) said that s/he did not really like learning new things. Thirty-nine clients (41%) said that they liked learning new things a bit and the remaining fifty-four clients (57%) said that they liked it a lot (see Table 3.16.).

Table 3-16 Service Users' Attitudes to Learning

	N	%
No, not really	2	2
Yes, a bit	39	41
Yes, a lot	54	57
Total	95	100

Learning goals

Clients that came for learning guidance were asked if they had any specific learning goals. They were able to choose as many as were applicable from a number of answer options. The most common learning goal was the improvement of skills in general. This learning goal was chosen by 46 service users (48%). The second most common goal was the achievement of specific qualification. Thirty-six clients (38%) had that learning goal. Thirty-two clients (34%) wanted to achieve a qualification of any sort (see Table 3.17.).

Table 3-17 Service Users' Learning Goals When Entering the GOAL Project, Iceland (N=95)

	N	%	%Cases
Yes, I want to improve my skills in general	46	24	48
Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification	36	19	38
Yes, I want to achieve a qualification of any sort	32	17	34
Yes, I want to improve my skills in a specific area	29	15	31
Yes, I need this learning to find a job	24	13	25
No, I do not have any specific objectives	15	8	16
Yes, I need this training for my current job	7	4	7
Total	189	100	199

Career goals

Counsellors were asked to report after the first session if, in their opinion, the client had clear career goals. **Most of the clients (51%) did not have clear career goals.** Thirty-one clients (19%) knew within which industry or the type of work they would like to do. Fifteen service users (16%) had a specific job in mind (see Table 3.18.).

Table 3-18 Service Users' Career Goals when Entering the GOAL Project, Iceland

	N	%	Valid %
Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	15	16	16
Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	31	33	33
No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	48	51	51
Total	94	99	100
Missing	1	1	
Total	95	100	

When analysing the service users target group by education level it reveals that the **clients with the highest educational level all belonged to the target group Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker**. Most of the clients with the least education i.e. had not completed primary education, belonged to the target groups Early School Leaver (40The majority of service users (56%) that had finished primary education also belonged to the target group Early School Leaver. Most of the service users that had finished lower secondary education (60%) belonged to the target group Migrant/Refugee/Asylum-seeker. Half of the service users that had finished general upper secondary education belonged to the target group Job-seeker/Unemployed. Eight service users had finished vocational education. Most of them (50%) belonged to the target group Job-seeker/Unemployed (see table. 3.19.).

Table 3-19 Service Users' Target Group By Education Level, Iceland

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary education (gymnasium)		Vocational education (upper secondary level)		Post-secondary education, non-tertiary		Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	1	10	15	28	2	40	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0	26	27
Early School leaver	4	40	30	56	0	0	0	0	2	25	0	0	0	0	36	38
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum-seeker	3	30	0	0	3	60	2	25	0	0	1	100	9	100	18	19
Detainee	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Over 50	1	10	0	0	0	0	2	25	2	25	0	0	0	0	5	5
Employed (& low educated)	1	10	8	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	10
Total	10	100	54	100	5	100	8	100	8	100	1	100	9	100	95	100

Most of the service users that had received previous guidance in adulthood (53%) belonged to the target group Early School Leaver. Most of the service users (29%) that had not received educational- and vocational guidance in adulthood, belonged to the target group Early school leaver. The detainee did not know If he had received guidance in adulthood (see table 3.20.).

Table 3-20 Service Users' Target Group By Previous Guidance in Adulthood, Iceland

	Yes		No		DK		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	9	28	17	27	0	0	26	27
Early School leaver	17	53	18	29	1	100	36	38
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	2	6	16	26	0	0	18	19
Detainee	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	1
Over 50	2	6	3	5	0	0	5	5
Employed (& low educated)	1	3	8	13	0	0	9	10
Total	32	100	62	100	1	100	95	100

The service users in Iceland all experienced various **barriers** to improving their education or career. Within the youngest age group, 19-25 years old, cost of education was the most common barrier, chosen eight times (42%). Lack of confidence was also chosen as barrier seven times (37%). Within the age group 26-35 years old, cost of education was chosen 24 times (51%) and lack of confidence was also chosen as a barrier 24 times (51%). It is therefore apparent that **among the younger age groups cost of education and lack of confidence were the most common barriers**. Within the age group 36-55 years old, the barrier that was mentioned most often was lack of confidence (55%). Within the oldest age group in Iceland, 56-65 years old, there were two equally common barriers, both chosen three times (60%). These were limited proficiency in country´s main language and Age (see table. 3.21.).

Table 3-21 Service Users' Barriers By Age, Iceland

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Insufficient basic skills	0	0	6	13	3	14	1	20	10	11
Limited proficiency in country's main language	2	11	16	34	5	23	3	60	26	28
Lack of prerequisites (entrance requirements)	2	11	9	19	3	14	0	0	14	15
Too busy at work	2	11	12	26	7	32	1	20	22	24
Too busy taking care of family	3	16	15	32	7	32	1	20	26	28
Cost of education or training was too expensive	8	42	24	51	4	18	2	40	38	41
Lack of information about courses	1	5	12	26	1	5	2	40	16	17
No suitable courses available	2	11	6	13	0	0	0	0	8	9
Courses offered at an inconvenient time/place	0	0	9	19	2	9	2	40	13	14
Negative prior experience with schooling	4	21	14	30	6	27	1	20	25	27
Learning disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia)	5	26	15	32	5	23	1	20	26	28
Age	2	11	2	4	2	9	3	60	9	10
Health problems	6	32	11	23	7	32	2	40	26	28
Lack of confidence	7	37	24	51	12	55	2	40	45	48
Lack of motivation	5	26	17	36	4	18	2	40	28	30
Lack of support from family	2	11	11	23	3	14	1	20	17	18
Lack of support from employer	0	0	2	4	2	9	0	0	4	4
Lack of transport or mobility	2	11	10	21	1	5	2	40	15	16
Cultural or religious obstacles	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	2
Criminal record in the past	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other personal reasons	3	16	9	19	2	9	0	0	14	15
Other	2	11	9	19	8	36	1	20	20	22
Total	19	100	47	100	22	100	5	100	93	100

When analysing service user's barriers to improvement of their education or career by gender, it reveals that **among the women, lack of confidence was chosen 29 times (45%) as a barrier. Lack of confidence was also the most common barrier among the men (52%)** The second most common barrier among the women was cost of education, chosen 28 times (10%). The same was true among the men (32%) (see table 3.22.).

Table 3-22 Service Users' Barriers By Gender, Iceland

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Insufficient basic skills	7	11	4	13	11	12
Limited proficiency in country's main language	23	36	4	13	27	28
Lack of prerequisites (entrance requirements)	9	14	6	19	15	16
Too busy at work	15	23	7	23	22	23
Too busy taking care of family	23	36	3	10	26	27
Cost of education or training was too expensive	28	44	10	32	38	40
Lack of information about courses	9	14	7	23	16	17
No suitable courses available	6	9	2	6	8	8
Courses offered at an inconvenient time/place	10	16	3	10	13	14
Negative prior experience with schooling	13	20	12	39	25	26
Learning disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia)	16	25	11	35	27	28
Age	5	8	4	13	9	9
Health problems	18	28	8	26	26	27
Lack of confidence	29	45	16	52	45	47
Lack of motivation	19	30	9	29	28	29
Lack of support from family	14	22	4	13	18	19
Lack of support from employer	2	3	2	6	4	4
Lack of transport or mobility	9	14	7	23	16	17
Cultural or religious obstacles	2	3	0	0	2	2
Criminal record in the past	0	0	1	3	1	1
Other personal reasons	6	9	8	26	14	15
Other	12	19	8	26	20	21
Total	64	100	31	100	95	100

According to the programme staff **most clients had a negative experience when it came to schooling and learning and because of that lacked confidence and had a high level of anxiety in that area.** Most were not ready to take courses and needed assistance so they could overcome this anxiety. **This anxiety was not only related to learning, but also to various activities in daily life.** They needed a lot of assertiveness training and motivation. The programme staff also felt that the clients had a lot of job-related anxiety. They were not aware of their strengths and skills and did not know how to start working on self-development (both professional and personal). The resolution of these complex issues is often a prerequisite for further education:

> *Many of them need empowerment and encouragement - because the "one step up" is the aim of the project – so that they start or continue in some kind of learning. […] But you can tell that many of them have anxiety issues and just lack confidence in general when it comes to learning. They have negative feelings, based on things that have happened during previous schooling (Program Staff member, Focus Group, May 2016).*

3.2 Programme staff

All program staff in the GOAL project were asked to complete pro-forma which gathered information on some demographic characteristics, on their job role, and on their qualifications and training. In this chapter, we report on programme staff's demographic and employment characteristics. Chapter 6, which focuses on counsellor competences, reports on staff's experience, education and training.

Gender and age

In Iceland there were **two GOAL intervention sites**, one in the southwest area and the other in the capital, Reykjavík. In total five counsellors worked on the project. Three counsellors stayed with the program from the beginning to the end, but one counsellor changed jobs after the first wave of the project and was replaced by another counsellor. The counsellors were all female and ranged in age from 32 to 55 years old.

3.3 Key findings

In Iceland there were high ambitions about reaching out to a vulnerable group of people. It is clear that most of the participants lacked confidence and experienced complex and difficult circumstances. **Even though most of the service users had negative experiences from prior schooling and learning, the majority of the GOAL clients had an overall positive outlook on learning new things.** The GOAL clients that had a greater amount of formal education (Tertiary education) were all within the target group Migrants/Refugee/Asylum-seeker. These clients were likely to experience barriers because of lack of skills in the native language and systemic obstacles that stem from the fact that the formal educational system in Iceland does not recognize all formal education and qualifications gained in other countries. **This means that many people that migrate to Iceland are not able to work in line with their acquired skills and knowledge.** About half of the service users in Iceland were job-seekers, but a large part of this group was inactive. Half of the clients in Iceland had no specific career goals.

The service users had in most cases serious issues, e.g. anxiety, poor financial situations, and various learning difficulties and disabilities that formed barriers to participation in education. These results from GOAL are in line with the results from an earlier evaluation carried out by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (2014)[12] where lack of time, shortage of financial resources, various learning difficulties and social circumstances were among the main barriers to participation in adult learning. **Due to those difficulties many of the clients are not yet ready to participate in further education.**

Access to and financial support for appropriate educational pathways may be an obstacle in the long run (system hindrances).

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[12] Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (2014). Úttekt á framhaldsfræðslukerfinu 2009-2013. [Evaluation of the secondary education system 2009-2013]. Reykjavík: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

3.4 Key Implications

The challenges associated with this particularly disadvantaged target group may have implications for guidance-related policy. It is possible, for instance, that **guidance services for particularly hard to reach groups should limit their focus to pre-educational and pre-employment elements such as punctuality, motivation and self-esteem**. Also, if the guidance is to be effective there has to be access to resources that aid in **dealing with the difficult circumstances and other barriers that the clients experience.**

Implications for future programme development

The circumstances, personal issues and complex barriers the service users in the GOAL target group in Iceland face, need to be dealt with first (or at least simultaneously with other guidance focuses) if clients are to be able to participate in adult learning. This means that **a programme like this is not only resource intensive, it impacts on what the counselling focuses on.** Counsellors may need to focus on basic behavioural issues such as punctuality. Counsellors may also need to develop competences that enable them to meet the target groups needs effectively e.g. competence related to psychological counselling, or these services may need to be drawn into the network.

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 ELGPN[13], 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

Clients were asked about their reasons for seeking guidance. The most common reason for seeking guidance was **to explore educational opportunities.** In 70 cases (74%) that was among the reasons for seeking guidance. In 56 cases (59%) the clients stated that finding links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities, was among the reasons for seeking guidance. Assistance with job seeking was also a common reason (45%). Clients mentioned other reasons than those predetermined in 12 cases (13%), those included social isolation, self-examination, self-reinforcement, goal setting and the enhancement of employability (see Table 4.1.).

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[13] 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 Service Users' Reason for Seeking Guidance, Iceland (N=95)

	N	%	% Cases
To explore educational opportunities	70	20	74
Interest assessment	56	16	59
To get assistance with job seeking	43	12	45
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	36	10	38
To get assistance with writing a CV	34	10	36
To validate existing competences/prior learning	33	9	35
To find financial resources for learning	32	9	34
Because of personal issues	24	7	25
To get information about different institutions and their roles	17	5	18
Other	12	3	13
Total	357	100	376

Once service users had selected all their reasons for seeking guidance were then asked to choose their main reason. Thirty-five clients (37%) selected **exploring educational opportunities as the main reason for seeking guidance.** Seventeen service users (18%) said their main reason was to get assistance with job seeking and sixteen clients (17%) said their main reason was interest inventory.

When analysing the service users main reason for seeking guidance it reveals that both in wave 1 and in wave 2, the most common reason for seeking guidance was to **explore educational opportunities.** Five clients (24%) in wave 1 of GOAL and 30 clients (41%) in wave 2, selected that as their main reason for seeking guidance. The second most common reason for seeking guidance in wave 1, was to get assistance with learning techniques (19%). The second most common reason for seeking guidance in wave 2, was to get assistance with job-seeking (20%) (see table. 4.2).

Table 4-2 Service Users' Main Reason for Seeking Guidance By Wave, Iceland

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	5	24	30	41	35	37
To validate existing competences/prior learning	2	10	7	10	9	10
Interest assessment	2	10	14	19	16	17
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	4	19	1	1	5	5
To find financial resources for learning	2	10	2	3	4	4
To get assistance with job seeking	2	10	15	20	17	18
To get assistance with writing a CV	0	0	1	1	1	1
Because of personal issues	0	0	1	1	1	1
Other	4	19	3	4	7	7
Total	21	100	74	100	95	100

The most common main reason for seeking guidance among the service users that had full-time employment was to explore educational opportunities (71%). The same is true for the majority of clients that had part-time employment (43%) and those that were self-employed. The most common main reason for seeking guidance among the unemployed service users, was to get assistance with

job-seeking (30%). The majority of clients that were inactive, mainly wanted to explore educational opportunities (40%) (see table 1. Appendix A).

When analysing the service users main reason for seeking guidance by educational level, it reveals that most of the service users that had lower educational levels i.e. had not completed primary education, had completed primary education or lower secondary education, wanted mainly to explore educational opportunities. As education increased, the clients were more likely to want assistance with job-seeking i.e. those that had general upper secondary education, vocational education, post-secondary education and tertiary education (see table 2. Appendix A).

Job seekers sought guidance mainly to explore educational opportunities (35%). **Most of the early school leavers (44%) also came for guidance to explore educational opportunities and to get an interest assessment (22%).** Most of the service users in the target group migrants/refugees/asylum-seekers, wanted to get assistance with job-seeking (56%). The detainee´s main reason for seeking guidance was to get assistance with job-seeking. The clients in the target group over 50 years old, were equally divided between five main reasons for seeking guidance. Within the target group employed and low-educated, the most common main reason for seeking guidance was to explore educational opportunities (67%) (see table 3. Appendix A).

Further analysis of the service users main reason for seeking guidance show that the largest percentage of the female clients (42%) sought guidance to explore educational opportunities. Most of the male clients (26%) sought guidance mainly to explore educational opportunities. Among the GOAL clients, **Men were proportionally more interested in validation of prior learning and assistance with learning techniques compared to women. On the other hand, women were proportionally more interested in exploring educational opportunities** than men (see figure 4-1.).
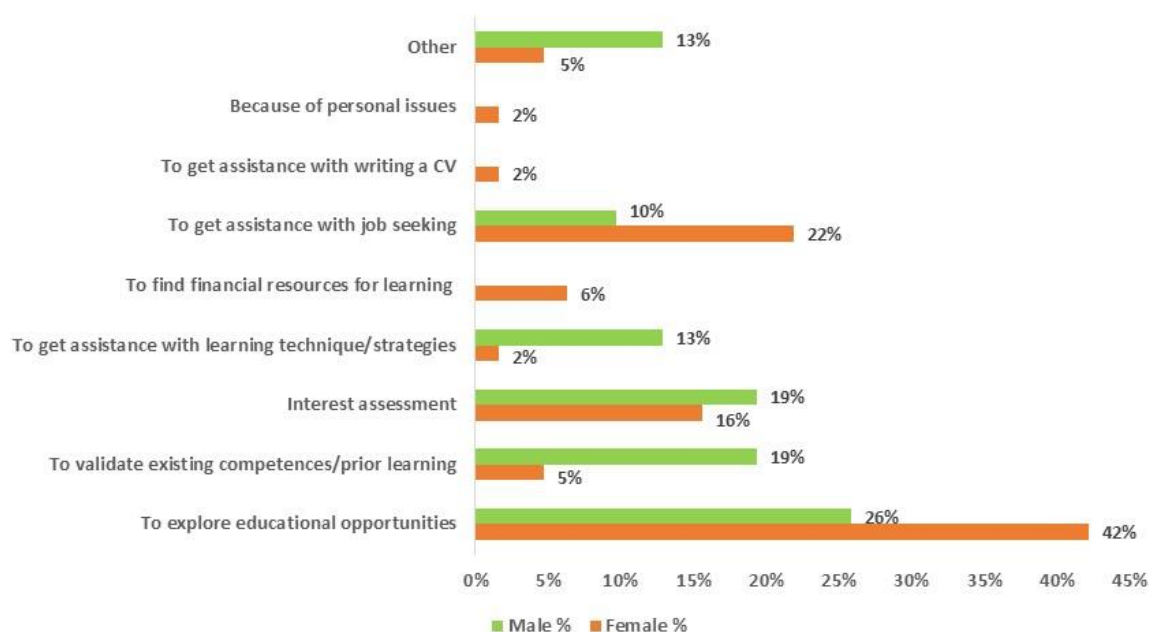
Figure 4-1. Service Users' Main Reason for Seeking Guidance by Gender (N=95)

When looking at the clients' age and the main reason for seeking guidance it seems that the **younger clients, 19-25 years old, were likely to be looking for interest assessment** (42%) **and educational opportunities** (37%). Most of the service users in the age group 26-35 years old sought guidance mainly to explore educational opportunities (43%). The same is true for the clients in the age group 35-55 years old (36%). It is interesting that **most service users in the oldest age group, 56-65 years old, did not feel that educational opportunities were the main reason for seeking guidance**. Instead, the main reason for seeking guidance within that age group was assistance with job-seeking. (see figure 4-2.).
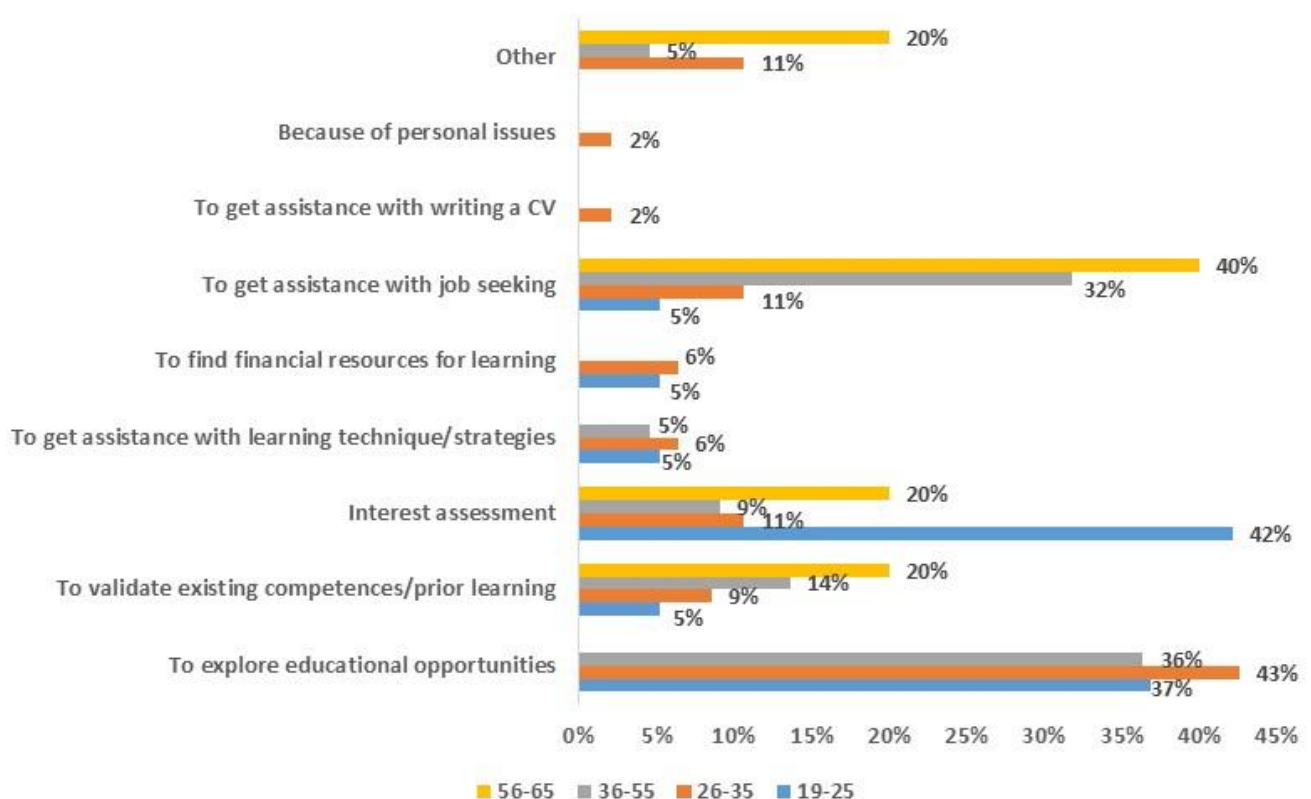
Figure 4-2. Service Users' Main Reason for Seeking Guidance by Age (N=93)

Contact type

During the wave 1 of the project, all of the clients in Iceland had their session in the form of **an individual face-to-face** interview. During wave 2, the majority of clients (65%) had individual face-to-face interviews. Forty-eight service users (13%) had their contact in the form of a face-to-face group interview during wave 2 and 49 clients (13%) had a phone-interview (see table 4.3.).

Table 4-3 Type of Contact by Wave, Iceland (N=94)

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Phone	0	0	49	13	49	12
Face to face individual	29	100	242	65	271	68
face to face group	0	0	48	13	48	12
Other	0	0	1	0	1	0
Not applicable	0	0	31	8	31	8
Total	29	100	371	100	400	100

All of the service users had their initial interview in the form of an individual face-to-face interview. In subsequent interviews the type of contact was more diverse, even though most of them were individual face-to-face interviews (65%). The Final interview was either an individual face-to-face interview (40%) or a phone-interview (27%). Thirty-one service users (33%) did not show up for their final interview despite the counsellor's great efforts in trying to reach them (see table 4.4).

Table 4-4 Type of Contact by Interview, Iceland (N=94)

	Initial interview		Subsequent interview		Final interview		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Phone	0	0	24	11	25	27	49	12
Face to face individual	95	100	138	65	38	40	271	68
face to face group	0	0	48	23	0	0	48	12
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Not applicable	0	0	0	0	31	33	31	8
Total	95	100	211	100	94	100	400	100

Length of session

During wave 1, the length of sessions ranged from 25-120 minutes. The most frequent length of session during wave 1 was 45 minutes. During wave 2, the length of session ranged from 10-180 minutes. The most common length of session during wave 2 was 60 minutes. Thirty-one sessions were marked as zero minutes, these are due to the fact that 31 clients did not show up for their final interview and were discharged from the program by the counsellors without an interview/exit data.

The initial interviews in the GOAL project ranged from 25-150 minutes. The most frequent length of an initial interview was 60 minutes. The subsequent interviews ranged from 10-180 minutes and the most common length of a subsequent interview was 60 minutes. the final interviews ranged from 10-90 minutes. The most frequent length of a final interview was 15 minutes.

Focus of the sessions

After each session the counsellors wrote a description of what was the focus of that particular session. These descriptions were than back-coded into four categories: Jobs,

Learning/education/qualifications, validation of prior learning and other topics. The focus of each session could be more than one of these topics. Table 4.10 lists the focus of all of the sessions (i.e. initial, subsequent and final interview).

Within the target group Job-Seeker/Unemployed, Learning (85%) and Other issues (85%) were the most common focuses of the session during the counselling. Within the target group Early School Leaver, Other issues (94%) and Learning (61%) were the most common focuses of the guidance sessions. Jobs (94%) and Other Issues (100%) were the most common topics within the target group of Migrants/Refugees/Asylum-seekers. The detainee focused on Jobs, Learning/Education/Qualification and Other Issues during his counselling. Within the target group Over 50 years old, the most common focuses of the sessions were jobs (80%), Validation of Prior Learning (80%) and Other Issues (80%). The clients that were Employed and Low Educated, focused mostly on Learning/Education/Qualifications (100%) and Other Issues (67%) (see table. 4.5.).

Table 4-5 Focus of the Session by Service Users' Target Group, Iceland

	Job-seeker/ Unemployed		Early School leaver		Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker		Detainee		Over 50		Employed (& low educated)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Jobs	12	46	10	28	17	94	1	100	4	80	5	56	49	52
Learning/Education/Qualifications	22	85	22	61	13	72	1	100	2	40	9	100	69	73
Validation of Prior Learning	13	50	3	8	1	6	0	0	4	80	2	22	23	24
Other issues	22	85	34	94	18	100	1	100	4	80	6	67	85	90
Total	26	100	36	100	18	100	1	100	5	100	9	100	95	100

Other issues were a big category in Iceland. Among things that fell within that category were Interest inventory, assistance with making a CV, personal barriers, general wellbeing, confidence building, empowerment and learning techniques. The main reason for why this category was so comprehensive in Iceland, were the difficult and challenging circumstances that the Icelandic service users experienced. The following quotes are an example of issues that the counsellor and service user focused on during the session:

> *We talked about the client's situation and wellbeing. He has experienced a lot of adversity in his life since he was a child. He describes setbacks that he has been through, learning- and social difficulties. He is now taking medication because of his mental illness. His financial situation is very bad and he believes that it is his main barrier today. We also discussed validation of prior learning and I am going the explore the possibility of starting the procedure as soon as possible (GOAL counsellor, description of the focus of the session, 23th February 2016)*

> *We talked about interest inventory, validation of prior learning and his strengths. We took a very close look at what have been his main barriers when it comes to employment (asthma, job-related anxiety) and decided what would be his next steps (GOAL counsellor, description of the focus of the session, 28th February 2016)*

The service user was diagnosed with bipolar disorder shortly after he started coming for sessions. he has since then moved away; he has started vocational rehabilitation. He was very poorly motivated and depressed at the beginning of the session. According to him, he doesn't have any friends, he is lonely and has suicidal thoughts (GOAL counsellor, description of the focus of the session, 28th April 2017)

All clients were asked to participate in a satisfaction survey after the first interview. One client refused to participate. They were asked, amongst other things, what was discussed during the session they just had. The answer options were topic related; jobs, learning and validation of prior learning. Clients were able to choose more than one option. According to the clients the most common topic during the first sessions was learning. **95% of the clients talked about learning with the counsellor during the initial session** (see Table 4.6.).

Table 4-6 ´What did you talk about during the session?', Iceland (N=94)

	N	%	% Cases
Jobs	69	32	73
Learning	89	42	95
Validation of Prior Learning	56	26	60
Total	214	100	228

Route to guidance: type of referring organisation

During wave 1, most of the service users were referred to GOAL by social (welfare) services (48%) or rehabilitation institutions (29%). During wave 2 of the GOAL project, most of the clients were referred by employment services (30%). Thirteen clients (18%) were referred by rehabilitation institutions and the same number of clients (18%) entered the project by other means. The routes to guidance became more diverse diversity during the second wave (see table 4.7.).

Table 4-7 Type of Referring Organisation By Wave, Iceland

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self-referral	0	0	4	5	4	4
(Un) employment services	1	5	22	30	23	24
Social (welfare) services	10	48	6	8	16	17
Educational institutions	0	0	3	4	3	3
Educational support services	1	5	7	9	8	8
Integration/migration services	0	0	3	4	3	3
Trade union	0	0	1	1	1	1
Consultant agency	0	0	1	1	1	1
(National) prison institution	0	0	1	1	1	1
Rehabilitation institutions	6	29	13	18	19	20
Other	3	14	13	18	16	17
Total	21	100	74	100	95	100

The largest group of female clients (30%) was referred to the guidance by employment services. The largest group of men (26%) were referred by rehabilitation institutions. When analysing the proportions, more men than women were referred by rehabilitation institutions and social services. Women were more often referred by employment services (see Table 4.8.).

Table 4-8 Type of Referring Organisation By Service User' Gender, Iceland

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self-referral	4	6	0	0	4	4
(Un) employment services	19	30	4	13	23	24
Social (welfare) services	9	14	7	23	16	17
Educational institutions	3	5	0	0	3	3
Educational support services	5	8	3	10	8	8
Integration/migration services	3	5	0	0	3	3
Trade union	1	2	0	0	1	1
Consultant agency	0	0	1	3	1	1
(National) prison institution	0	0	1	3	1	1
Rehabilitation institutions	11	17	8	26	19	20
Other	9	14	7	23	16	17
Total	64	100	31	100	95	100

When analysing different age groups in connection to referral organisation it is obvious that **the largest percentages of service users in the youngest age group were referred by (un)employment services (26%) and rehabilitation institutions (26%)**. Most of the service users (26%) within the age group 26-35 years old, were referred by employment services. Most of the clients within the age group 36-55 years old, were referred by (un)employment services (27%). Within the age group 56-65 there were five service users, three of them were referred to GOAL by rehabilitation institutions and two (40%) by social services (see table 4.9.).

Table 4-9 Type of Referring Organisation By Service User' Age, Iceland

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self-referral	0	0	4	9	0	0	0	0	4	4
(Un) employment services	5	26	12	26	6	27	0	0	23	25
Social (welfare) services	3	16	9	19	2	9	2	40	16	17
Educational institutions	0	0	1	2	2	9	0	0	3	3
Educational support services	2	11	4	9	2	9	0	0	8	9
Integration/migration services	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	2
Trade union	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Consultant agency	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	1	1
Rehabilitation institutions	5	26	6	13	5	23	3	60	19	20
Other	4	21	8	17	4	18	0	0	16	17
Total	19	100	47	100	22	100	5	100	93	100

As explained in Chapter 3, the counsellors were asked to categorise clients into target groups. Most of the job seekers (54%) were referred by (un)employment services. Most of the early school leavers (36%) entered the GOAL guidance by other means than those predetermined on the list. Most of the service users within the target group migrants/refugees/asylum-seekers, were referred by (un)employment service (50%). The detainee was referred by a prison institution. The five clients that were over 50 years old, were all referred by rehabilitation institutions. The service users within the target group employed and low educated, mostly entered the guidance by self-referral (22%) or other means (22%) than those predetermined on the list (see table 4.10.).

Table 4-10 Type of Referring Organisation By Service User' Target Group

	Job-seeker/ Unemployed		Early School leaver		Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker		Detainee		Over 50		Employed (& low educated)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self-referral	1	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	22	4	4
(Un) employment services	14	54	0	0	9	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	24
Social (welfare) services	4	15	10	28	1	6	0	0	0	0	1	11	16	17
Educational institutions	2	8	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Educational support services	0	0	3	8	4	22	0	0	0	0	1	11	8	8
Integration/migration services	0	0	0	0	3	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Trade union	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	1
Consultant agency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	1
(National) prison institution	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rehabilitation institutions	4	15	9	25	0	0	0	0	5	100	1	11	19	20
Other	1	4	13	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	22	16	17
Total	26	100	36	100	18	100	1	100	5	100	9	100	95	100

Clients' counselling needs

In the GOAL project in Iceland the aim was to **reach out to more vulnerable groups that generally do not seek guidance**. The majority of clients faced many personal barriers e.g. Anxiety, depression, drug addiction, learning disabilities and financial problems. Most of them had negative prior experience with schooling, they lacked support, motivation and confidence. **In many cases resolving these problems is a prerequisite to further education**. Unlike in traditional vocational- and educational guidance, where many of the clients have an idea of where they are heading and only require 1-2 information sessions, the majority of clients in the GOAL project in Iceland needed more guidance. Therefore, **most of the clients in the GOAL project in Iceland were those that required five or more sessions, dealing with personal and other problems**, or clients that needed 3-4 sessions unsure of where they were heading, and needed tools such as an interest inventory to show them (see table 4.11).

Table 4-11 Type of Service Users Within the GOAL Project, Iceland

Type 1	The Service Users knows where he is heading and only requires 1-2 information session
Type 2	The Service User needs 3-4 sessions and does not know where he is heading, and need s tools such as an interest inventory for guidance
Type 3	The Service User requires five or more sessions and has personal and other problems.

The basis of these three categories of service users were presented by Sampson, Peterson, Reardon and Lenz (1992) and used to organize and shape career services. The underlying theory is the Cognitive information processing approach[14].

4.2   Guidance activities and processes: Qualitative findings

According to the programme staff **most clients had negative feelings towards education and schooling and experienced a lot of anxiety related to performance in general**. Many of them **needed assistance in resolving those issues before they were able to take the next step and acquire further education**. Usually the clients **lacked self-confidence**, they **did not know what their strengths were and where to start in order to improve their circumstances**. The counsellors, in cooperation with the clients, have tried to **find solutions** to their issues and barriers. They have offered educational guidance, assistance with learning techniques, and assistance with anxiety related to taking tests (i.e. test-anxiety) and anxiety related to learning in general. They have, in cooperation with the service users, analysed study habits, time-management, interests, work-values and general attitude towards work. They have also referred clients to other specialists e.g. psychologist, financial advisor.

> *It is also my feeling, that they have a lot of work-related anxiety, and often the problem seems to be that they lack self-knowledge, they don't know their strengths, they don't know what to do, or how to begin [..], so I feel that we are focusing on that, helping them in getting rid of this heavy baggage, that they carry around, and is full of messages that they are somehow not enough. (program Staff Member, Focus Group, May, 2016)*

Some of the clients are already taking **courses that aim to minimise anxiety and build self-confidence**. Some of the service users are involved in programmes to overcome consequences of their **addiction**. According to the counsellors a large part of their guidance has involved **self-esteem and confidence building**, as well as assisting the clients with finding out what are their strengths and what they would like to do and motivate them to follow through. According to the counsellors, the

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[14] Sampson, J. P., Jr., Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Reardon, R. C. (1992). A cognitive approach to career services: Translating concepts into practice. *Career Development Quarterly, 41*, 67-74.

service user's main barrier is in most cases their **lifestyle (e.g. addiction) and their poor financial situation**:

> *I would say that most of them feel that their main barrier is their financial situation and problems derived from that. Anxiety and depression as a consequence of always worrying about that (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016)*

According to programme staff the activities related to the GOAL project were in some ways different from other activities at the programme sites. The main reason for this is that the sessions with GOAL service users took more time and were more thorough than usual. Normally, the clients seek the service at the programme sites at their own initiative. The GOAL project required counsellors to reach out to potential clients which also made GOAL activities different and more challenging:

> *When we are in a more traditional vocational- and career guidance, the clients choose to come to us because they have something specific that they want to explore. In GOAL we are almost "dragging" them in and they agree to participate in the project and then wait for something great to happen! But you have to be ready to take on some self-examination [..] and maybe you are not there yet. I think that is maybe the main difference between GOAL and more traditional guidance (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).*

The counsellors felt that there was support from management at both programme sites so there were no conflicts with broader organisational remits and activities, but despite the support of management there was a common understanding that the programme staff assigned to the GOAL project were responsible for its activities and development.

According to programme staff the interviews in the GOAL project were very different from traditional interviews (i.e. with the service users that normally seek guidance at the program sites). Service users were asked to take part in a study and the counsellors had to earn their trust and ask them for informed consent. They explained that the clients themselves were not the subject of the study but the service itself. They also felt that the Monitoring Data Template was a good tool to start of the discussion and gathers important and detailed information. It also gave the client food for thought for the next interview about possible next steps:

> *It is a good interviewing technique, there are really good questions there, that in some ways lead us straight to the problem (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).*

The GOAL counselling was also different from traditional guidance because usually when people seek guidance they have specific issues in mind, but in the GOAL project the counsellors were **reaching out to the clients and pulling them into the guidance** session. The clients agreed to take part in the project and then waited for something great to be done for them, but were maybe not yet themselves in the position to take the initiatives that were needed for their situation to change. Even so, the counsellors felt they were making progress with the clients, but at a different level from when they are working with the target group they normally service in educational- vocational guidance:

It depends on how you define progress. If progress is measured in tiny steps, like showing up to an interview on time after weeks of social isolation, increasing interpersonal skills and improving quality of life in a very broad sense, then yes we are making progress. But if you mean progress by getting them to sign up for learning or a course, they are just not there yet. There are many steps to take before they get to that point [..] it all depends on how you define progress (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).

The programme staff agree that **educational- and vocational guidance with low qualified adults is very different from guidance with younger people** (i.e. 18 years old or younger). As people get older their circumstances usually become more complex e.g. increased financial responsibilities, cumulation of difficult prior experience. Therefore, during counselling with low educated adults it is important to **take a more holistic approach** to guidance that takes into account many complex external factors. In most cases the GOAL service users had negative experiences during schooling when they were younger and that shaped their feelings towards guidance and education (i.e. the formal educational system). They usually had responsibilities and commitments, both financial and emotional, that formed a barrier for their participation. Health issues were often also a barrier to further education and ongoing guidance. These are among the reasons why **low-qualified adults often have less time, fewer opportunities and face more obstacles than other groups of people,** when it comes to attending guidance sessions. According to the programme staff, open mindedness and awareness of these and other potential issues was important. The need for consideration, thoughtfulness and tactfulness was elevated during the guidance sessions in the GOAL project:

My approach is to look at the person as a whole, taking into account external factors, because these are adults [...] they have negative experiences, children, limited time, financial commitments. I think that is what guides me the most (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).

Looking at methods and tools which respond to service user needs was the focus of the method group which was established particularly for the GOAL projects. The group had three meetings before the GOAL guidance sessions began (see further discussion about the method group in chapter 7). A working meeting with experienced counsellors from the Directorate of Labour also provided support on which interviewing techniques could be most effective. Basically, it was the theories and techniques of motivating interviewing and general theories of career counselling which set the stage, since the counsellors had all been trained in those during their education. Local partnerships created information sharing of approaches through preparation meetings and conversations linked to the service users (programme evaluation):

We got great introduction about various methods and tools in the method group and it was very exciting. We have been looking towards the Directorate of Labour and everything that they are using. It is really great and we are getting certain inputs now from them (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).

The target group in the GOAL project in Iceland was very challenging and many of the service users had limited work history. Most of them had various learning difficulties and disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia), some of them had a long history of drug abuse and many had severe health issues, physical-, mental- or social. Confidentiality, trust, sincerity and understanding was of utmost importance. It was also necessary to adjust the conversation and the tasks that were undertaken during the sessions. **According to the counsellors it was important to speak in short and simple sentences or you could lose the clients' attention. Many of the service users had limited self-initiative and therefore it was not enough to make suggestion about what could take place in subsequent sessions.** In order to get results there had to be a well-defined and well-formed action-plan in place:

> *What I also feel is different with this group, is that there is a need for a very clear step-by-step action plan. There is no room for "next session we could, we might consider" it has to be "next session we will, we must". We have to be more determined and decisive (Program Staff Members, Focus Group, May 2016).*

The counsellors hoped to motivate the service users. They wanted them to become more confident, start something new and experience more self-efficacy, but they were also a bit doubtful. The clients had, in most cases, been **stuck in the same place for a long time** and therefore the counsellors felt it is rather **unlikely that many of them would seek education or overturn their way of living during the duration of the GOAL project:**

> *I mean, people that have not been able to change their lifestyle for their immediate family and those that they love, why should they suddenly decide to do so for us (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).*

Even though most of the clients were not yet ready to take the next steps towards further education, the counsellors hoped the clients would be inspired and they would have increased knowledge about what resources are available and where they can access them. They felt that the guidance was successful because they were **planting seeds** that the clients would hopefully be able to grow in the future:

> *There are a lot of complex issues, but it [the counselling] leaves something behind. So, when these individuals finally reach a place in their lives where they are capable and willing to do something, then I believe that they will return, because we have already planted seeds (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).*

The counsellors also felt that there are **opportunities within the group of immigrants in Iceland**. They believed there were needs within that group that could be met if access to interpreter services would be facilitated. In the absence of interpreter services, the counsellors try to communicate with immigrants in English and the little Icelandic they might know. **The immigrants in GOAL were eager to get integrated into society, they wanted to work, and to learn Icelandic, but often didn't know where to begin and what was available** to them:

> *I mean, there is a great need within that group and we could do much more if we had access to more services from interpreters (Program Staff Member, Focus Group, May 2016).*

There were two service users interviewed in the GOAL project, one from each program site. Both of them were female and unemployed. The older woman was in her fifties and the younger woman was in her mid-twenties. Both of them were very pleased with the guidance. They felt that the counsellors were helpful and understanding. The older woman, was very pleased with the attention she got and the opportunity to talk about her circumstances and expectations. The younger woman, felt the counselling had been empowering and mobilising, she had a better idea about her possibilities and next steps:

> *At least I am not in the same place now, I know my next steps after the sessions […] at least I am not just always at home (Service User, Face-to-Face Interview, May 2016).*

The older woman wanted to increase her computer skills. She wanted to get a job, but due to her physical condition she needed a job that allowed her to be seated during her working day. She was not very optimistic about achieving her goals, as she felt that she was getting too old to start anew. She felt that guidance and further education was more for younger people:

> *My problem today is also, because of my physical condition I cannot stand upright for long periods at a time. I have asked them to help me with finding a job that allows me to be seated while I work, it seems to be complicated and difficult and all that, and also my age and probably the biggest obstacle is my lack of computer knowledge (Service User, Face-to-Face interview, May 2016).*

The younger woman wanted to increase her general employability. With the help of her GOAL counsellor she had decided to take courses so that she could finish her general upper secondary education. She was very pleased with the guidance and felt she was making progress and being more active:

> *I want to finish my secondary education, you know, I kind of quit school in the 8th grade so I am learning how to learn again (Service User, Face-to-Face Interview, May 2016).*

Seeking to meet client needs: The guidance process

The most common format of engagement on both programme sites was individual face-to-face interviews. Each client had one initial interview and most of them had subsequent interviews and a final interview. Thirty-one client did not show up for their final interview. Some clients had **up to 10 interviews during the whole duration of the project**, with this number dependent upon client needs, and agreed upon in consultation between client and counsellor. The sessions ranged from 10 minutes to two hours depending on the client's needs and what s/he would like to discuss and explore during the session. In the first interview there was a lot of data collection in accordance with

the Monitoring Data Template. **The counsellors felt that the initial data collection was a kind of a needs analysis**. While they collected the data they tried, simultaneously, to connect different needs and interests to a possible action plan and discuss with the client what their expectation and hopes were regarding the programme. According to the counsellors **the first interview did not involve much else than introducing the GOAL project to the clients, general data collection and the process of gaining trust and getting closer to the clients.**

During the counselling sessions at MSS and Mimir program sites, the needs of the service user were in focus in every session. That was the premise for the guidance at both sites – delivering a custom fit service. The implication of this, is that there was great flexibility offered in regard to:

- Guidance route
- Structure of the session
- Duration of the session
- Frequencies of appointments.

Although the approach was individually customised, a **counselling process is divided in five phases**: Attending, Exploring, Understanding/goal setting, Intervention, and Finalisation:

1. **Attending** – In a safe, quite environment the client meets the counsellor, who explains the process, what can be expected from both sides. The client will have an intake interview in which the symptoms, the situation and feelings and if possible the needs of the client are expressed.
2. **Exploring** – Reporting, listening, relation building. The client's circumstances are explored and the problem(s) known and understood.
3. **Understanding/goal setting** - Developing a goal, stating the goal - Assessment of the current situation, causes for the problem and possible solutions.
4. **Intervention** - Generating alternatives or choices. The client makes a choice, plans and acts and evaluates. Problem solving and decision making. The counsellor supports in generating, evaluating and deciding on alternatives and is given feedback.
5. **Finalisation** - The client evaluates gains, acknowledges changes, plans further steps. The counsellor assists in evaluating, gives feedback on plans and readiness for following steps, and plans a possible follow up.

A qualitative analysis of stakeholders' descriptions of the activities (in the registration system) during each face-to-face guidance session reveals ways of classifying the activities. It is however not the case that each client has gone through all these steps, but all guidance activities can be classified under either of these steps as described below under the two main steps 'Intake' and 'Guidance sessions'.

1. **Intake and general information provision (first (and sometimes second) session):**
- Acquaintance and building trust (Background of the client (holistic approach), specific focus on education and work, specific learning questions, general and/or specific interests, often including a reconstruction of the studying past of a client).

- General information on obtaining a diploma of secondary education and/or the general landscape of adult education (presenting different systems and possibilities).
- Information on a particular field of study and/or about specific courses and/or a particular educational institute.
- Information on various aspects linked to the world of work.

2. **Guidance sessions:**

- Testing and analysing personal and/or and vocational interests and discussing results of the test.
- Discussing competences.
- Information on a particular field of study and/or about specific courses and/or a particular educational institute.
- Analysing different educational programmes or courses based on specific interests.
- Making a selection of study programme that are possible options ('crystallising phase').
- Developing a personal action plan: making agreements on different steps (e.g. searching for and reading information, doing an online interest test at home, visiting information days or sessions in educational institutes, making a study plan).
- Discussing state of affairs (following up on action plan, feedback on 'homework' done or other steps in action plan).
- Information about and/or preparing for the intake of a particular study programme.
- Making an educational choice (and arranging practical issues for enrolment).
- Discussing obstacles and identifying possible solutions.
- Dealing with personal hindrances in the scope of educational and vocational guidance.
- Referring for resolving obstacles: (mental) health problems, addition problem, financial problems, language problems.
- Information about recognition of foreign diplomas.
- Re-orienting (in case earlier chosen directions turns out to be not feasible or desirable, the process can start all over again).
- After enrolment: study planning (planning of modules, planning study programme, discussing and resolving obstacles faced, etc.).

Client case studies

The following case studies are based on qualitative data from the counsellor's registration system (the counsellor's description of actions during the sessions), and are written from the counsellor's perspective. The case studies provide examples of how a custom fit guidance path looks and how guidance paths may differ, depending on client needs.

Client 1:

The client: Male, 58 years old, married, has two children, teenagers. Is now in vocational rehabilitation.

Main hindrances are anxiety, insecurity, as well as he has trouble with connecting to others, is rather unsociable/reclusive.

When he started vocational rehabilitation he had been struggling with physical pains, musculoskeletal disorders and chronic muscular rheumatism with mental problems, anxiety and sleeping disorders. He had difficulty conducting his job because of the above-mentioned problems, as well as having had a collision on his way home from work one day. The anxiety had an impact on him. He experienced increased anxiety and stress related to returning to work. He found himself constantly under stress. He was anxious about communication and projects at work, because of his physical condition. He was referred to the GOAL project by a consultant at the rehabilitation centre.

1st Interview

In the first interview we discussed options that the GOAL project offered. I Presented to him an Interest inventory, told him about, and discussed, the importance of pursuing what he wants to do. We discussed potential occupational obstacles which in his case include asthma, work-related conditions and anxiety (also lack of intuition). We discussed possible steps and his interests. His dream is to work in construction, and he would like to be a construction teacher in elementary school, but he thinks he isn´t able to do it, because he claims to work very slowly (his own words). We discussed the importance of having faith in one's own ability and do what makes you happy. The client is very handy and capable of construction work. He has an education in cabinetmaking.

2nd Interview

Self-esteem and well-being was introduced and discussed. Possible jobs were discussed again and whether he had seen/thought of something new. He was encouraged and I am examining potential job training places. Then we discussed what would happen if he would be invited to an interview for a job training. Things that matter on a job interview were discussed. We also talked about his aims, "where do I want to go". We discussed the importance of believing in oneself and expanding one's own comfort zone. We also discussed the connection between well-being and physical appearance - how we appear to others. Changes in the labour market, Life Long Learning and aging were also discussed. Next steps - make a CV and an introductory letter. He took home a Competency Portfolio form which he intends to examine and start working on. We talked about the progress he has already made and how important it is to notice the progress of his steps. He got homework (task/assignment) - My Achievement and Employability skills. Important to spot these elements, the tasks are designed to help him do that.

3rd Interview

In the meantime, the client had participated in a workshop where he wrote his CV and an introductory letter. Then his interests were discussed and he did an Interest inventory.

4rth Interview

Results from the Interest inventory were reviewed and discussed.

5th Interview

Coaching – an interview with a Coach.

6th Interview

He answered the *Career Adapt-Ability Inventory* (CAAI). His situation was discussed and his experience of the Coaching.

7th Interview

Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) results reviewed. We reviewed the factors in which he scored low and possible reasons - potential remedies. The client has started in job training. We discussed his strengths, weaknesses and his resources. Also what matters apart from the written job description – the unlisted job description (e.g. how to behave in social settings, friendliness, tidiness and general courtesy). Next we will review how he is doing at the new job training. The client had already participated in two job trainings which did not work out/ he quit. Therefore, we considered it important to go through these aspects for the next job training.

Next time there will be a final interview.

The client has got a job training where he is doing well (it is the third place he has had job training). Today he will finish the program at the rehabilitation centre. He has got higher self-esteem and is more aware of his own skills.

Client 2

The client came to Iceland as an asylum seeker in 2011, along with her husband and their baby. They settled in and began Icelandic studies, but soon moved away from the area and both got jobs in a factory. She received an Icelandic ID number in 2013. They moved back to the area in early 2016 and got an apartment. Then the family had grown, two more children had joined the group. They continued studying Icelandic, but she spoke very little Icelandic and no English. She was therefore very socially isolated and dependent on her husband who spoke good English and interpreted everything for her. The client's native community in Iceland is very small and therefore she did not have contact with many outside her family. The program at the LLL-centre was her only social forum. In August 2016, the couple divorced and her ex-husband moved to another country. She had fallen pregnant with their fourth child. She joined the GOAL project in December 2016, but I had known her through the School of Immigrants. She has very little formal education other than compulsory schooling in her native country. She is now a single mother with three children between the ages of two and seven, expecting the fourth child in April 2017. She has support from the welfare services and is doing well enough to make ends meet. She has little experience in the labour market since she has been busy with childcare. However, she has some experience in fish processing, child welfare and household support.

1st Interview

We discussed her circumstances as a single mother with little Icelandic skills. She wants to be able to work in an office in the future. She wants to study, is positive and optimistic despite her difficult circumstances. She made a Competence portfolio and we made an individualised action-plan for the next steps. The plan should help her take the next step, taking into account her circumstances, set

goals and enhance her self-image. Next, she will answer an Interest inventory, if it will be available in English. Most interviews are conducted with an interpreter that speaks her native language and interprets back to me (the counsellor) in English.

2nd Interview

No interpreter was available, so we decided to do the Interest Inventory later, there were many other urgent tasks. The client's Icelandic study was discussed. She is practicing at home on the computer and watching Icelandic material. We also discussed her children's homework. She would like to be able to better support her daughter's studies. Her daughter is starting in a special department in a new school. I urged her to help her with her reading and practice Icelandic at the same time. I taught her ways to do so. I got her permission to talk to her consultant at the Social Services to look for resources for her children. Her goal today is to strengthen her Icelandic skills by taking part in the program. She wants to be able to help her children more at home.

3ʳᵈ Interview

She came along with an interpreter and requested a certificate for studying in Iceland, because she is applying for a passport. I registered her for an Icelandic course and she starts Monday, this will also reinforce her socially. Before she came to this interview, I had talked to her consultant at Family and Social Services. We will work together to support her well-being. The consultant is currently exploring a PMT (Parent Management Training) course for her. She is also listed in group counselling (course on self-esteem and communication that will be conducted on behalf of the GOAL project).

4rth Interview

She participated in the course *Self-esteem and Communication*. She also participated in discussions and exercises after a lecture on the subject.

5th Interview

She is due after a month with her fourth child. She is alone with no support/network in Iceland, as native society in Iceland is very small and her family is all in her native country. Her former husband has moved to another country and refused to transfer his residence from Iceland for a long time because he did not want to pay her child support. In cooperation with the social authorities, district commissioner and the State Social Security Agency, we have assisted her with getting that corrected. She has gotten a new apartment through the Municipality and should have returned the old one this week. She is exhausted and very sad. She does not know if she is getting help (with her moving) and I advised her to go to her consultant at the Social Services and make sure immediately. I will also talk to the consultant to follow up on it. There was very little else I could do but console her. I contacted her consultant at the Social services, who is also very concerned about her situation and promised to assist her. It went well and the next time I talked to her she was very cheerful and grateful for all the help she got. I have, among other things, been in contact with the Red Cross, the rehabilitation centre and the Church's Welfare Fund to get clothing and equipment for the unborn child and the other children. I have a good relationship with her consultant at the Family and Social Services.

When this is written, an interview with an interpreter has been booked in April. This will be a formal final interview of the Goal project but she will continue to be interviewed by me next weeks. She still needs encouragement and follow-up for Icelandic education and personal affairs.

Her personal action-plan was based on her circumstances and her life struggles, which have to do with her being a single parent with three children and the fourth on the way. She doesn't have energy for much else. However, there is no question in my mind that this hardworking and courageous woman will achieve her goals, given she receives all the support she is entitled to as an Icelandic citizen. Her priorities are clear. She knows that she has to study Icelandic because that is the key to achieving her goal of working in an office in the future.

The only formal option that she took part in was the group counselling *Self-image and Communication* which the GOAL counsellors had prepared and adjusted to the needs of the group at hand.

She participated in group counselling, but needs further support with learning Icelandic and solving personal issues. Her individual plan has been based on her circumstances that are largely shaped by being a single parent with many children. While her time and energy is devoted to her children, there is not much time left for other activities. There is no question in my mind that in due time she will reach her goals. Her priorities are clear. She is resourceful and takes good care of her finances, even though she does not have much. Her self-image has grown stronger these last months. I think, after her husband left her, at a very difficult time, she has shown tremendous survival skills and efficiency. With every obstacle she overcomes, she gets stronger. She receives financial support through the Municipality offices in her area.

4.3   Key findings

Guidance activities and processes: quantitative findings

The most common reason for seeking guidance among the GOAL service users during both waves of the project, was to explore educational opportunities. Many clients were interested in finding links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities. The exploration of educational opportunities was the most common reason for seeking guidance among service users that were employed (full-time/part-time), while the most common reason among unemployed clients was assistance with job-seeking. The service users that had not finished primary school wanted mostly to explore educational opportunities, while the service users with post-secondary education or higher, wanted to get assistance with job-seeking. Most of the service users wanted to explore educational opportunities regardless of target group, the exception was migrants/refugee/asylum-seeker and the detainee. Most of the clients within these target groups wanted mainly to get assistance with job-seeking. The five clients that were over 50 years old, all sought guidance for different reasons.

Collaboration with partner organisations has led to referrals of clients and sharing of knowledge. Referrals have proven to be the most successful way to get participants in the project.

Most younger clients wanted to explore educational opportunities while most of the clients within the oldest age group wanted to get assistance with job-seeking.

The most common type of contact during both waves was face-to-face individual interview, whether it as the first, subsequent or final interview. The sessions ranged from 10 minutes to 180 minutes during the project. The longest initial interview was 150 minutes, while the longest subsequent interview was 180 minutes. The longest final interview was 90 minutes.

The most common type of referral organisation during wave 1, was social services. During wave 2, the most common type of referral organisation was employment services. Most women were referred by employment services, while most men were referred by rehabilitation institutions or social services.

Guidance activities and processes: qualitative findings

The counsellors experienced support from their managers at the programme sites of the GOAL project. The project fitted well with other organisational remits even though the guidance was in some ways different from traditional educational and vocational guidance sessions (i.e. the research element of the project, longer and more thorough sessions, different target group and outreach measures).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the aim in the GOAL project in Iceland was to reach out to a vulnerable group of people. Therefore, the target group in the GOAL project in Iceland was very challenging and many of the service users had limited work history. Most of them had a psychological diagnosis or learning difficulties and disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia), some of them had a long history of drug abuse, and many had severe health issues, whether mental, physical or social, or some combination thereof. The GOAL programme staff in Iceland felt that due to these complex issues many of the service users were not ready to take courses at this stage, and these issues needed to be dealt with first or at least simultaneously if they were to be able to participate in adult learning. These results were supported by the fact that about half of the clients sought guidance to get help with personal issues and the focus of the session was, over half the time, personal issues and barriers.

According to the counsellors a large part of their guidance involved self-esteem and confidence building. This included assisting the clients with finding out what were their strengths and what they would like to do in the future and motivating them to follow through.

Due to the vulnerability of the GOAL target group in Iceland confidentiality, trust, sincerity and understanding was of utmost importance. Thoughtfulness and tactfulness were highly important. It was also necessary to adjust the conversations and the tasks that were undertaken during the sessions. According to the counsellors it was important to speak in short and simple sentences or you risked losing the client's attention. Many of the service users had limited self-initiative and therefore it was not enough to make suggestion about what could take place in subsequent sessions. In order

to get results there had to be a defined and formed action-plan in place. Even though most of the clients were not yet ready to take the next steps towards further education the counsellors felt that the guidance was successful because they were planting seeds that the clients would hopefully be able to grow in the future.

The sessions in the GOAL project were different from traditional guidance sessions at the programme sites. The main reason for this was that the sessions with GOAL service users were longer and more thorough than traditional sessions, the service users were more vulnerable and had a different level of readiness, means of reaching them were also different. During traditional educational and vocational guidance, the clients seek the service at the programme sites on their own accord but in the GOAL project the counsellors were reaching out to potential clients, which also made GOAL activities different.

According to the counsellors, the Monitoring Data Template was a good tool to open the discussion and gather important and detailed information. It also often gave the client food for thought for the next interview.

4.4   Key implications

Implications for future programme development

The needs of the target group are key to future programme development. When developing a program for a target group with highly complex needs, every aspect of the programme must take that into account. The program has to be flexible and responsive to client needs. The approach needs to be holistic, which focuses on the individual rather than a specific topic, e.g. job vs learning. The custom fit approach demands that counsellors be highly flexible and able to adapt to the clients' needs. Strong interpersonal skills are required. Many clients in the target group lack initiative and need a detailed action plan concerning next steps. This might imply that the sessions need to be on a short interval (i.e. occur relatively frequently) to keep the clients motivated and interested.

The difficult and complex circumstances of the target group highlight the need for cooperation among different institutions and professionals. A system of referrals between specialists (e.g. social worker, financial advisor, psychologist, physical therapist) is needed if the aim is to meet the needs of the clients and work towards them becoming more active and fulfilled.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

Poor financial situation is one of the target group´s main barrier. The lack of funding and/or scholarships in the adult educational system can form a great barrier for the target groups commitment to further education.

Implications for policy

Vulnerable clients have a broad range of mutually inter-related needs. This suggests the potential for policymakers to support even closer links between projects such as GOAL and other initiatives aimed at the most vulnerable in society.

The GOAL target group in Iceland are in the highest percentage of cases those who need 2-3 sessions and who don't know where they are heading. They are also many who require five or more sessions and have personal and other problems. This implies that there has to be an allocation of funds and resources if there is a desire to meet the target group's needs within the adult educational system in Iceland.

The complicated and diverse issues that the target group in Iceland faces, highlight the need for a network of agencies, institutions and specialists that are able to assist the target group. A referral system between institutions and the sharing of knowledge is needed, as is joined up policy thinking on behalf of The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and The Ministry of Welfare.

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

One of the aims of the GOAL project in Iceland was to establish or improve networks and partnerships with relevant organisations. The intervention strategy aimed to **build sustainable partnerships that were optimally equipped to identify and reach target groups**. These partnerships consisted of institutions and organizations that can easily **connect with the target group**. Among those were migration offices, social- and cultural organizations, employment services, social services, trade unions, rehabilitation institutions and other institutions that have a connection with the target group. Throughout the trial, representatives of these organisations (stakeholders) were being involved in setting out collaboration structures in order to identify the target groups and bring them into contact with the guidance service. **Collaboration structures were developed and used**. The aim was also to **raise awareness** about the activities of the LLL-centres and inform network partners on the educational guidance services they offer. Partner organisations are often unaware of the service and do not recognise the value it could add to their own.

During GOAL, extensive time was put into working on cooperative partnerships and defining the target group. Various **stakeholders were contacted and the project presented**. A **method group was established focusing on sharing of methods and tools** – this is a multilateral network. MSS took part in meetings of an existing multilateral network linked to supporting vulnerable groups in the Suðurnes area. The multilateral network on social welfare – an **information sharing network** – was established and MSS introduced the GOAL project at a network meeting in 2015. Both Mimir and MSS carried out activities to raise awareness and inform network partners on the educational guidance services they offer.

Both Mimir and MSS sent information letters and held meetings, both formal and informal, with current and potential program partners. The **aim was to establish formal collaboration around counselling services, and a base for a long term cooperation, structural referrals and network building**. Both organisations **reached out to other organisations that they were familiar with, and asked them to introduce the project within their networks**. Hlutverkasetur (*Role Centre*) was contacted. It is an activity centre in Reykjavik for people with mental health issues. The project was introduced to the clients of Hlutverkasetur in an informal chat. The director of the centre connected the program staff to occupational therapist at the Landspitali, University Hospital in Reykjavik, that oversees rehabilitation of patients. Among the aims of the service is to get the patients active again in the labour market or within the educational system. Even though it did not result in any referrals to the GOAL project, Mimir is now a part of this already established network. The GOAL project was also introduced within the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre Janus and The Vocational Rehabilitation

Centre of Hafnafjordur; these did not result in a formal cooperation, but might in the future. Mimir held presentation within Reykjavik Department of Welfare and offered to hold a course among their employees (a course on dyslexia), but nothing came of it. The counsellors also stressed repeatedly within their LLL-centres, that participation in the GOAL project was available for the centre's clients.

In the beginning of the project there were plans to reach out to the companies in the **private sector** in Iceland, that employ many low-qualified workers. Despite great efforts managerial support was lacking, within the companies, and partnerships were not established.

5.2   Existence and scope of partnerships and networks

Educational partners

In the scope of partnership and network in GOAL Mimir and MSS serve the role of educational partners and some of the participants were recruited from educational pathways from within Mimir and MSS such as the Landnemaskólinn (*e. School of Immigrants*).

Rehabilitation Institutions

Samvinna is a **vocational rehabilitation** centre in Suðurnes area (Southern Peninsula area) and was a partner organisation of the program site MSS. It is located in the same building as MSS and the collaboration between the two institutions was very successful. Samvinna services individuals who are **unable to participate in the labour market due to health problems**. To be able to join Samvinna the individuals need a referral from a physician and the objective is to help them become active participants in the labour market. This could also involve further education to increase possibilities for the individual in the labour market. MSS has had close cooperation with Samvinna since it merged with MSS in 2014. The partnership aims to continue and deepen cooperation on individualised services for the future.

Fjölsmiðjan was a partner organisation of the program site MSS. It is a **vocational rehabilitation centre** for young people (16-24 years old) that are on crossroads. It offers diverse rehabilitation pathways and gives them opportunities to train for the labour market and for further study. Fjölsmiðjan was a new partnership for MSS and aimed to provide educational guidance to young people in rehabilitation.

VIRK is a **vocational rehabilitation** centre in Reykjavik. The purpose of VIRK´s services is to help people return to work. This involves expert advice and services in the field of vocational rehabilitation that requires full participation of the individual concerned. VIRK operates in close cooperation with unions, employers, various service providers in vocational rehabilitation and welfare agencies. Vocational rehabilitation counsellors work on behalf of VIRK and are situated with the unions across the country. VIRK services are free of charge for individuals.

Local policy partners

Welfare (Social Services) partners

Reyjavik City Welfare (i.e. Social Services) was a partner organisation at the program site Mimir. It is a welfare system for citizens in Reykjavik who, for various reasons, are not employed and get benefits from the City. Mimir is in contact with many social workers and counsellors at different service centres in the community. The objective of the partnership was the referral of participants to the GOAL project and to make a connection with other counsellors in order to build a network that would benefit both parties in the future and the target group. The Reykjavik City Welfare was a new partner for Mimir.

Reykjanesbaer municipality (social services) is the fifth largest municipality in Iceland. The employees at the Reykjanesbær welfare department are interested in the welfare and best interests of the inhabitants. The aim of the Reykjanesbær welfare department is to support people to self-help and improve the living standard of those who are less fortunate. They emphasize child-friendly social services and preventative action in order to prevent social problems.

Social Services Sandgerdi, Gards and Voga is located in the Reykjanes area. It provides social and child welfare services in the municipalities, Sandgerdi, Gardur and Vogar. Among other things, the service provides social counselling and financal aid. Support for families and the elderly.

National Prison Institutions

The Icelandic Prison Service, was a partner organisation at the program site Mimir, and is responsible for all those in Icelandic prisons and halfway houses. The aim of the partnership was the referral of participants to the GOAL project. The Icelandic Prison Service was a new Partnership for Mimir and aimed to create cooperation through referrals of service users to the GOAL project and to link these participants to education.

Employment partners

The Directorate of Labour bears overall responsibility for public labour exchanges and handles day-to-day operations of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Maternity and Paternity Leave Fund, the Wage Guarantee Fund and many other projects connected with the labour market. The Directorate attends to a range of responsibilities including the registration of job-seekers and the calculation and payment of unemployment benefits. In addition to its headquarters in Reykjavík, the Directorate has eight regional offices around the country which give job-seekers and employers professional assistance with employment searches and staff engagements.

Trade Unions

Efling was a partner organisations of the programme site, Mimir. It is one of the largest Trade Unions in the area. Almost all members of this Union have low educational levels. Collaboration with Efling on guidance activities has been informal, but there are formal contracts in place on projects where specific courses have been offered to Efling members. The union members have always been able to have a counselling session with Mimir's counsellors, but non-formal collaboration for counselling and guidance activities have been in place. Mimir has cooperated with Efling-trade union through the

years, occasionally offering open counselling session at their premises. Through partnership with Efling, Mimir's objective was to offer trade union members opportunities for further education, career development, workability and employability.

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

Establishing cooperative partnerships within the private sector, with companies, took more time and effort than was anticipated, and in the end nothing came of it. In the beginning of the GOAL project there were plans to establish cooperation with large manufacturing companies in Iceland, that have many low-qualified workers. These companies could have been a source of many service users in the GOAL project. The counsellors contacted middle management (e.g. human resource management) within these companies and introduced the project to them. Usually they were interested but more often **the idea was not supported at higher management levels**:

> *We had been talking to the human resource manager of the company for a while, and she was very positive towards the project. But when it came down to it, there wasn't support at higher levels (GOAL Program Staff Focus Group, May 2016).*

The counsellors felt that maybe the companies didn't see what they stood to gain from participating. They might even have seen it as an inconvenience:

> *Maybe they don't see what they are gaining from it [partnership in GOAL] and I mean, the employee must take time of his working hours, leave the assembly line. I understand that it's not easy, it's not something that like: yeah great! [..] the company must see what it stands to gain (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).*

Another challenge was that the counsellors felt, during the project, that they needed to be constantly reminding other organisations about the service they were offering, to stimulate continued cooperation and referrals their way. This was a challenge and the advisory-group meetings that were held regularly during the project were very useful in this regard.

Many individuals in the GOAL target group had **complicated personal issues**. These issues sometimes needed the involvement of healthcare specialists (e.g. physicians). For example, in order to get accepted into vocational rehabilitation a person needs a certificate from a physician or another authorized healthcare agent. This can create a system barrier. The **GOAL project has underlined the need for connecting different systems that influence the target group** (e.g. the healthcare system, welfare system and the educational system), so that the needs of the target group can be met in a more effective manner:

> *We are in collaboration with various organisations within the welfare sector, but what I would like to see is a deeper connection with the health-care system. There are probably good explanations why we are not better connected [..], but I think that is*

something we need to be looking at (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers Focus Group, April 2017).

5.4 Strengths and achievements

According to programme staff the **programme partners are very concerned for their client´s wellbeing** and are very ambitious and professional. **They have extensive experience working with the target group** and most have counsellors delivering educational – and career guidance on their behalf. In some cases, attendance is a prerequisite for receiving welfare or employment benefits. **In the beginning of the GOAL project the programme partners were a bit confused because they felt their organisations were already servicing the target group**. The GOAL programme staff were afraid that they might belittle the good and effective job already being done by the programme partners because **most of the partner organisations had educational and vocational counsellors** working with the target group already. The programme staff felt that collaboration within the GOAL project needed to have obvious benefits for the programme partners and those needed to be highlighted when presenting the GOAL project to them:

> *The programme partners need to see how participation will benefit them, maybe we need to present the GOAL project more in that way [..] of course we should emphasize the possibility of us taking some of the load off them. Some of their clients have been with them for a long time and it might be useful to them if they are able to refer them to us. It can be good to get a break from regulars (GOAL Programme Staff Member Focus Group, May 2016).*

The concerns about overlapping services proved to be unnecessary. In the end it was not problematic during the GOAL project. The reason for this is likely to be shared interests and ambition for the welfare of the service users among different stakeholders, good communication and information sharing, as well as the sharing of workload. The GOAL guidance was more focused on further education, whereas PES guidance is generally more focused on the labour market. The programme staff were very pleased with the quality of the collaboration that was achieved in the project. They felt that there was a great deal of good will and that everyone was eager to assist them. The programme staff at Mimir were very pleased with the collaboration with the social services at Reykjavikurborg. They felt that there was a widespread willingness to cooperate:

> *I think they [staff members at Reykjavikurborg] just felt that it was their duty to lend us a hand and that this commitment was established among the administrators and then was transmitted to lower levels within the organisation (GOAL Programme Staff Member Focus Group, May 2016).*

Proximity matters, the closer the program partners were to the service the better the collaboration. At the programme site MSS **the location of the programme partner Samvinna in the same building as MSS benefitted the collaboration enormously**. The counsellors knew the employees of Samvinna, their communication was informal and friendly. They were in close vicinity of potential service users

and could easily remind them of upcoming sessions. The proximity and the willingness to cooperate was the strength of the collaboration between MSS and Samvinna and they achieved an effective cooperation that both parties want to continue in the future:

> *The staff members at Samvinna usually say that this is our shared project [the GOAL project], they are so great (GOAL Programme Staff Member Focus Group, May 2016).*

The strength of these collaborations between the program sites and program partners led to referrals of clients to the GOAL project. **The GOAL project showed that referrals by organisations that service the target group already, was the most effective way to reach out to the target group**. An extensive network of partner organisations could facilitate referrals of clients between institutions and increase the possibility of reaching out to these more vulnerable groups of people:

> *One of the aims within the project was to find ways to reach the target group and in my opinion the results are telling us that in order to reach the group, we need extensive cooperation between multiple parties. The Adult Educational System was maybe not in the best position to reach them and in fact experienced difficulties. This tells me, and I think we can all agree, that we need to work together on a project like this and I think that was the main conclusion (Program Partners and Policy-Makers Focus Group, April 2017).*

During the GOAL project the counsellors reached out to groups of immigrants in their area. A group of Polish women were referred to Mimir by the Directorate of Labour. Immigrants were also referred to MSS by Landnemaskólinn (*The School of Immigrants*). There was general satisfaction with the service among the immigrants. Because of an effective cooperation, **bridges have been built and MSS will continue to have greater involvement with immigrants in their area as a result of the GOAL project**. According to the program staff, the need was great among the immigrants and they were all very appreciative:

> *They have been very thankful for the service. They have needed various information, including information about scholarships, information about other institutions and their roles. Most of them can't afford education but they are interested in knowing how the various systems works in Iceland and how to adapt in society. They are just struggling to make ends meet and bring up their children in a foreign country (GOAL Program Staff Member, June 2017).*

During the GOAL project, the cooperative partnerships, advisory-group meetings and research results have highlighted the **need for formalised collaboration**. The programme partners and policymakers believe that a formalised collaboration and network can benefit the target group. The formation of a platform for a continued and effective collaboration between organisations and even with governmental ministries is considered desirable. **The issues that concern the target group in many cases, are both complex and diverse. Educational- and vocational guidance alone cannot solve these issues. The individual needs to be approached holistically**. The collaboration among different institutions and professionals, the sharing of information, knowledge and experience could lead to more efficient service for the target group. The programme partners and stakeholders feel that the

building of bridges between various organisations is one of the main strengths of the GOAL project and very beneficial for programme partners and other stakeholders:

> *What we need to do is to formalise the collaboration and consultation between systems […]. The systems need to work together, an overall policymaking is needed (Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group, April 2017).*

5.5   Key findings

Developing partnerships and networks: programme aims

In regards to partnership and networks, the aim was to establish or improve networks and partnerships with relevant organisations. The building of sustainable partnerships that were optimally equipped to identify and reach target groups. The aim was also to raise awareness and inform network partners on the educational guidance services they offer. Unfortunately plans to establish partnerships with companies in the private sector were not realised.

Existence and scope of partnerships and networks

The formation of partnerships took time, but went well and all parties were pleased with the increased collaboration. The slight overlaps between services did not appear to cause problems across services, thanks to good communication between GOAL and partner organisations, and the good will of all parties. The sharing of knowledge and experience benefitted everyone. The programme partners, policymakers and programme staff think that further implementation of a formalised collaborative network is desirable and could benefit everyone involved in the future. The program partners also felt that the healthcare system should have a presence when finding ways to reach and service the more vulnerable groups in society.

Challenges and barriers

It took time to find common understanding about how the program could benefit all parties involved. Cooperation was very beneficial once established. The GOAL project has highlighted both the need and willingness to formalise cross-organisational collaboration. The main challenge has to do with the next steps of formalising a cross-organisational network between different institutions and systems, that are involved with the target group. This requires comprehensive policy-making within and between the relevant sectors (e.g. welfare- healthcare- and educational sector). The absence of the healthcare system within these collaborations is possibly reducing the potential success of the service and creating barriers.

Attempts were made to form a collaboration with large manufacturing companies during the GOAL project. The aim was to offer low-qualified employees, with little formal education, participation in the project. Nothing came of these attempts, as support from upper management levels was lacking. One of the future challenges will be to form an effective connection between the adult learning system and the company sector in Iceland.

The proximity of the service providers to potential service users, enhances the effectiveness of the service. In light of that the location of Mimir can be a challenge. The implementation of a collaborative network with frequent consultation meetings to strengthen the connection between relevant institutions in the area could be beneficial. The formation of new collaborative liaisons can be time-consuming. It seems to depend on organisational roles and the structure of the institutions involved (e.g. communication channelling).

Strengths and achievements

The development of existing and new partnerships was based on the fact that the service users were to a large extent drawn from vulnerable groups who face many challenges. The programme partners feel that the meetings that were held in connection to the project, about tools, methods and strategy, were very valuable and benefited everyone involved, including, indirectly, the clients. Mutual learning took place between the partner organisations and valuable information sharing for the competence development of the counsellors in the project.

The majority of the service users have not sought educational- and vocational guidance within the adult educational system on their own initiative. A vast majority of the clients in the GOAL project were referred to the counselling by cooperative organisations and institutions that were already servicing the target group. The adult educational system didn't seem to have the most effective way of reaching out to the group. Thus, through effective collaboration the GOAL project has highlighted the need for a cross-organisational referral system.

Networks are more readily formed now due to the building of bridges during the GOAL project. Relevant organisations are more aware of each other's roles and the services offered by the LLL-centres. Organisational borders are not as prominent and mutual interest has developed for extensive interdisciplinary cooperation, that aims to strengthen the service to the target group.

5.6   Key implications

Implications for future programme development

The sharing of knowledge and resources between programme partners and other stakeholders has been mutually beneficial, but time needs to be allotted for mutual understanding and planning of developments. It is crucial that the benefits of partnership to those involved are clear. The collaboration of diverse organisations might be favourable in light of the complex issues and circumstances that the target group is faced with. Roles of different parties within the collaboration need to be clear.

The establishment of an effective partnerships with employers was not successful. Future programs should try to get employers commitment earlier, for example by including employer representatives and/or trade union representatives on a steering group.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

Institutional borders can create a barrier. The absence of a connection with the healthcare system is possibly reducing the potential success of the service for the target group and creating barriers.

Implications for policy

In Iceland the aim was to reach out to more vulnerable groups. Individuals that have not sought guidance within the adult educational system at their own initiative. Their circumstances were in many cases highly complex and they needed the aid of different specialists. An increased knowledge of available resources within other organisations and a referral system between partners would enhance the service to these clients. Improved partnership and networks enabled the sharing of expertise and knowledge.

The creation of incentives within the private sector, that motivate managers to encourage their employees to participate in adult guidance and increase their qualifications, might also be beneficial.

Policymakers within relevant sectors, can support the process of building and maintaining a collaboration between organisations, both systematically and informally, amongst partners working with vulnerable groups. Appropriate support and sharing of responsibilities has the potential to improve effectiveness and policy efficiency. The issue of funding and subsistence among adult learners needs to be addressed within policymaking. Most adults have financial commitments and can't afford loss of income while studying. Policymakers can initiate and steer the process of connecting systems (e.g. healthcare system, welfare system, educational system) that will facilitate service to more vulnerable groups in the future.

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

Educational and Vocational counsellors in LLL centres assist people in identifying their strengths and then identifying appropriate routes for ongoing competence development. There are various individual needs and approaches, and methods and tools need to be chosen accordingly. What has been identified in the GOAL project as important competences is based on existing national and international material. The following points are set forth to summarise the **foundation for quality counselling for the target group**:

- Uses professional and ethical work habits which are recognized in career counselling.
- Assesses the challenges and situation of the individual in a social context, sets goals and organises own counselling work.
- Uses recognised interviewing techniques, analyses and assesses own communication and the effects of own attitudes and values.
- Facilitates individuals to be aware of internal and external resources and assist them in identifying solutions.
- Makes professional and well-reasoned decisions based on the knowledgebase of career counselling as well as critical assessment of tasks and situations.
- Ethical behaviour and professional conduct.
- Advocacy and leadership in advancing clients learning, career development and personal concerns.
- Awareness and appreciation of client cultural differences.
- Awareness of their own capacity and limitations.
- Ability to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counselling programmes.
- Familiarity with information on educational, training employment trends, labour market and social issues.
- Communicates effectively with colleagues.

The job title 'career-counsellor' is licensed in Iceland and most counsellors have a diploma or a MA in career counselling (educational- and vocational counselling). Social workers and psychologists also provide services to the group.

A job description and ethical guidelines are in place on a national level for career counsellors, developed by the Association of Career Counsellors. Those have been based on for example IAEVG (International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance).

Programme staff experience, education and training prior to GOAL

All the GOAL counsellors are university educated. One has a Bachelor's degree in Developmental- and Educational Theories, a Diploma in Management of Educational Institutions and Educational- and Vocational Counselling from the University of Iceland. Three of the counsellors have a Master's degree in Educational and Vocational Guidance and Counselling from the University of Iceland. One has a Candidatus in Psychology.

All of the counsellors have participated in professional development or training activities relevant to their guidance and counselling roles. **The average time spent on professional development and training amongst the counsellors is 12 days during the past two years.** These activities have included learning new interviewing techniques, courses concerning empowerment, courses to acquire a license to administer an interest inventory and validation of prior learning. (The objective of the interest inventory is to find links between personal interests and occupational/educational opportunities.) The counsellors all plan to participate in professional development or training activities relevant to their guidance role in the next year.

The counsellors have all worked in adult counselling for at least a year. The counsellor with the shortest experience in working in adult counselling had worked in that field for a year at the time the GOAL project started. One of the counsellors had worked in adult counselling for two years, two for three years and the counsellor with the most experience with adult counselling had worked within that field for 13 years by the beginning of the GOAL project.

Counselling activities

Four out of five counsellors in Iceland are employed full-time and one is employed part-time. Their job title and current role is educational- and vocational counselling. One counsellor has a temporary contract with the employing organisation but the others all have permanent contracts. The counsellors spend on average of **33 hours each week** in adult guidance and counselling activities. Each counsellor spends on average **9 hours each week on GOAL project activities.**

A financial administrator is also supporting the project in each lifelong learning centre, and the directors are to some degree involved in developments (in some cases other staff as well).

Defining competences

The job title 'educational- and vocational counsellor' is regulated in Iceland and most counsellors have a diploma or a MA in career counselling (educational and vocational counselling). Social workers and psychologists also provide services to the target group defined in the GOAL project (more vulnerable).

A job description and ethical guidelines are in place on a national level for career counsellors, developed by the Association of career counsellors. Those have been based on for example IAEVG (International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance).

The Master program for career counsellors has set general and specific competence standards which are also in line with European documents as well as North-American.

For identifying competences for the GOAL project various resources were reviewed (from the National association, Standards from the Master's program for career counsellors in Iceland, International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance - IAEVG, NICE-handbook for Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals).

The NICE Handbook for Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professional addresses the main competences categories for counsellors and also defines the different roles for career advisors, career counsellors and career professionals.
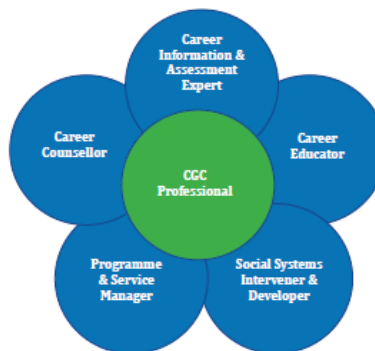
Image 4.1: NICE Professional Roles, © NICE 2012

Those were discussed and analysed at a steering group meeting/national project management team with the GOAL counsellors and the competence most relevant to GOAL were identified.

The following competences come from the standards in the Master's program for educational- and vocational counsellors in Iceland. Those are quite relevant for the services to be provided in the GOAL project specifically those marked in red:

The 5 most relevant are the following:

- Uses professional and ethical work habits which are recognized in career counselling.
- Assesses the challenges and situation of the individual in a social context, sets goals and organises own counselling work.
- Uses recognized interviewing techniques, analyses and assesses own communication and the effects of own attitudes and values.
- Facilitates individuals to be aware of internal and external resources and assist them in identifying solutions.
- Makes professional and well-reasoned decisions based on the knowledgebase of career counselling as well as critical assessment of tasks and situations.

These competences are somewhat in line with IAEVG core competences which are also appreciated also in the context of the GOAL project:

- Ethical behaviour and professional conduct.

- Advocacy and leadership in advancing clients learning, career development and personal concerns.
- Awareness and appreciation of client cultural differences.
- Awareness of their own capacity and limitations.
- Ability to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counselling programs.
- Familiarity with information on educational, training employment trends, labour market and social issues.
- Communicate effectively with colleagues.

Aims

At the beginning of the project the questions set forth linked to intervention three (development of tools) were analysed. Since general competence profiles exist for career counsellors in Iceland there was a **specific need to look into competences linked to servicing the more vulnerable groups** in the GOAL project. That includes dealing with more personal hindrances on the way towards decision making and taking the next steps for educational/vocational development. This was done through creating a **method group** where specialists from socials services (social workers) and career counsellors from PES informed the GOAL steering group on their methods and tools. The result of this was to focus **on training in motivational interviewing** specifically since that method came highly recommended from the method group. Also identified as an important tool was the **Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)** as it assists in identifying the **readiness of services users** in regard to educational and vocational guidance. Training was offered to career counsellors in all LLL centres in motivational interviewing and the GOAL counsellors attended a workshop on Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI).

It is evident through the experience of the counsellors that **professional boundaries and roles need to be clear**. The target group has in many cases complicated hindrances which often need to be dealt with by other specialists before educational- and vocational counsellors can assist the individuals in addressing their educational/career development. In the GOAL project, the counsellors often experienced that they were going beyond their professional remit as education/career counsellors. But, with close cooperation with other specialists (stakeholders/service providers) it was possible to identify processes for a smoother transition – where personal hindrances had been dealt with so that the readiness of the individual for career guidance was adequate. For example, it turned out to be less successful when individuals who were in the initial phases of support within the social-, or rehabilitation services were referred to career guidance compared to those who had undergone a support program based on their needs *before* moving into career guidance. The latter group got better results out of career guidance since their 'readiness' was higher in a sense that they had been able to deal with and find solutions to their most immediate challenges and could therefore focus to a larger degree on their own competence development. Through that, the career guidance services turned out to be more successful.

The steering group meetings – which included project managers (both educated and experienced career counsellors), researchers and career counsellors in the GOAL project – turned out to be very

useful and effective in regard to addressing challenges in the guidance processes. The group provided valuable learning and peer support for all involved.

6.2   Achieving high standards of counsellor competence

Service user perceptions

The client satisfaction survey asked service users about several aspects of their counsellor's competences, for example, "Did the counsellor explain things clearly?" For each question, service users could tick a box indicating an answer of 'yes', 'no' or 'somewhat'. The evaluation team opted for this simple three-point scale (as opposed to a more detailed five-point scale) as one of a number of steps aimed at making the client satisfaction survey as user-friendly and non-demanding as possible – steps that were felt to be essential given the limited reading skills of many programme participants.

There were no major differences between the answers to the satisfaction survey between waves, therefore the results from the satisfaction survey are not presented by wave. Eighty service users (86%) reported that the counsellor discussed their job or learning options during the first session. All but one clients felt the counsellor understood their questions during the initial interview (99%) and a vast majority felt they got helpful information (96%). Most of the service users felt the counsellor understood their needs (91%), was encouraging (95%) and explained things clearly (97%) (see figure 6-1).
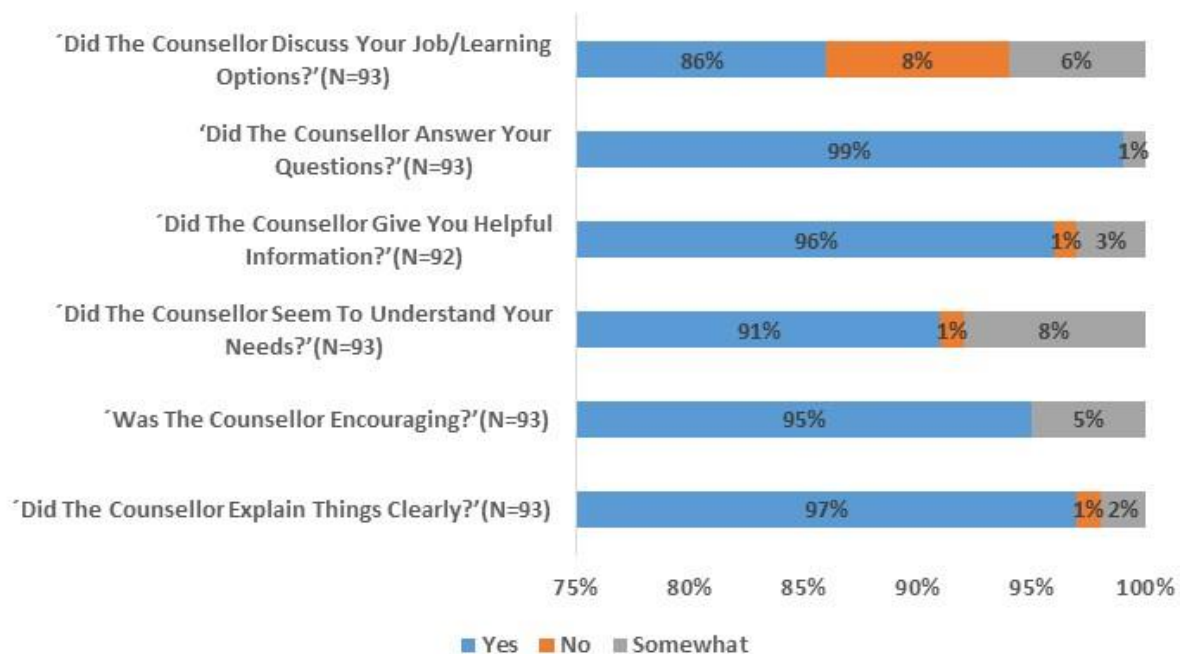
Figure 6-1Service Users' Satisfaction Survey, Iceland (N=93)

Twenty-two clients participated in the **follow-up survey**. Among other things, they were asked about how they experienced the counselling process. The participants were asked if there was any particular aspect of the guidance process that was especially important or crucial for them. Out of the twenty-two clients all of them were pleased with the counselling. Twelve clients did not recall if there was any particular aspect of the counselling process that was especially important, they were just pleased with the overall process. Among the things that the service users felt were the most important aspects of the guidance process were the good advice about jobs applications and how to conduct oneself when going on job-interviews, the assistance with finding proper schools and courses, the confidence building, the overall helpfulness and willingness of the counsellor and the connection they made with other people in similar situations:

> Yes, there were many girls from Poland around my age with the same problems, I could talk with people like me, I wasn't alone with this problem. (GOAL Service User, Follow-Up Survey, March 2017).

One service user felt the counsellor was very helpful, friendly and gave valuable information:

> When I started [the counselling] I maybe knew about three places to learn Icelandic, but now I know about more. Also the atmosphere was very relaxed, no tension. I did not feel like I was at school, I felt valued. I felt good within the group and during the counselling. Also, when we had questions the counsellors did their absolute best in answering them. (GOAL Service User, Follow-Up Survey, March 2017).

All 22 participants in the follow-up survey reported that there was never a time when they felt like they didn't want to return to counselling. The clients were asked in the follow-up survey, if there was anything they would change about the counselling in order to improve it. Only one client suggested that the perhaps the interview could be longer and there should be less paperwork. All the other clients were very pleased and didn't have any suggestions:

> I think it was really good, for me perfect! The lady was really really nice. You felt like you had known her for ten years. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey, March 2017).

> I don't think so. In my opinion it [the counselling] was totally excellent! When I didn't have the car the counsellor came to me for the sessions and I didn't have to go to her. I don't see how this could be better. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey, March 2017).

In the follow-up survey the service users were asked if it was easy to understand the information provided during the counselling sessions. One client (5%) did not recall, the remaining 21 service users (96%) felt that it was easy to understand the information provided during the counselling.

Staff and other stakeholders' perspectives

The programme staff are in general, experienced and competent in working with low skilled adults and individuals with short formal education. The GOAL target group was more challenging than the traditional low skilled adults in a sense that most of them experienced very difficult circumstances,

lacked confidence and had problems with addiction and various other health issues. According to the programme staff this required them to use different interview techniques:

> *I mean, the client has been using drugs for 22 years and the addiction has controlled everything in his life, he has hardly had one sober day during this time. Using these tools that we normally use [..], they are just so different [the GOAL service users]. It's just too many words, the sentences are too complicated, we have to use very short sentences […] if the sentence is too long, then you lose their attention. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

The programme staff also felt the meetings with the method group were very effective. Learning about tools that are being used by other institutions that have worked with the GOAL target group on regular basis was particularly valuable (e.g. Social Services, The Directorate of Labour):

> *We got an excellent introduction about various tools during the method group meeting, and that's all very useful. For example, we are very excited about getting introduced to tools that the Directorate of Labour uses, and we are getting certain inputs from them now. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

During these meetings the counsellors learned about **Motivational Interviewing** which was, in their opinion, very effective during their work with the target group:

> *I feel the motivational interviewing technique has been most effective, because it requires the client to find the answers himself. The person has to look within, because it's different when you feel from within that you are doing good, then if a counsellor says to you that you're doing good [..]. I feel that when I use motivational interviewing, clients discover it on their own, and then I can lead them forward and help them [take the next step], because we have a lot of good tools, but personally I feel there is nothing as effective as motivational interviewing. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group April 2017).*

According to the programme staff they welcomed the opportunity to develop new skills and increase their competence e.g. by taking courses or going to lectures. Their superiors are very ambitious and supportive when it comes to training and retraining of employees. The Education and Training Service Centre holds nationwide meetings twice a year that aim to improve and develop new ways to service and reach the target group (i.e. adults with little formal education). These meetings are a good forum to get insights into new methods and tools and to learn from the experiences of other professionals. According to the counsellors they often attend various shorter courses called 'Stiklur'. These are training courses involving development and implementation of tools and techniques. In addition to these courses the counsellors themselves are active in spotting training opportunities. According to them, their superiors are very supportive towards employees taking advantage of these opportunities:

> *I feel that our managers are very supportive and ambitious towards it [retraining and lifelong learning among the counsellors] they want us to grow as individuals. I have*

worked in guidance at different levels within the educational system and the way that the retraining and lifelong learning is organised among employees within the adult education system is exemplary. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).

According to the programme staff there are no challenges to improving staff competence except maybe just finding out what courses are the most beneficial: *"It's really just looking and finding the appropriate [the appropriate course]. I have not experienced any challenges so far"* (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016). Other stakeholders also feel that the counsellors have increased their competence during the GOAL project:

> *They [the counsellors] have been on many courses and gotten many new tools. That I think is a certain benefit for the employees and the workplace as a whole. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).*

Summary of strengths and achievements

The GOAL project in itself has been a contribution to counsellor's competence. The counsellors are now more capable of meeting the target group's needs. **The challenges and the barriers that the target group faces have underlined the need for adaptability, flexibility and open-mindedness during the counselling**. The counsellors have had to look at the client's issues and resources from many different perspectives, **connecting needs with the appropriate tools quickly and effectively**. The counsellors also feel that now they have more knowledge about the service offered by other stakeholders and a better understanding of the system as a whole. Working with other professionals contributed to counsellor's competence and discussions within steering groups were particularly valuable. Career counsellors received additional training in order to build competence suitable for the target group (Motivational Interviewing Technique and Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)). The counsellors agreed that the **motivational interviewing was especially beneficial to the guidance with the target group since internal factors were in many cases the main barrier towards progress**. The training in motivational interviewing proved to be very effective in detecting those issues and defining and dealing with '**resistance talk**'. Resistance talk occurs when the client expresses a conflict between their view of the problem or the solutions, or when the client experiences their freedom or autonomy being impinged upon. It's a signal that the person is dissatisfied with how the conversation is developing. The notion of identifying high and low resistance can also assist in regards to referrals to other professionals:

> *Also, I must admit that I didn't recognise fully the "resistance talk" during interviews [before the motivational interview training], but I hear it so clearly now [..], and its important because if you expect too much from the clients and push too hard, it will backfire and you won't get the desired results. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).*

Many of the clients had negative prior experiences when it came to school and education. The thought of further education raised anxiety and they lacked self-confidence in general. The counsellors felt that they had in many cases been able to have some positive effect on the clients in that area, but they recognised that a dramatic change in self-image takes longer time:

I think you can help people realise their strengths and then continue the work from there [..], but a few sessions are not going to have a dramatic effect on your self-image, that takes time and work. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

The participants in the follow-up survey were in general pleased with the counselling and had positive things to say about it:

I am more self-assured in my future goals, I am more positive and think towards the future in a more positive way. In the beginning, I knew I wanted to accomplish something, but I wasn't sure what. Now I am more confident about what I want to do and how I want to achieve it. (GOAL Follow-Up Survey, March 2017).

6.3   Challenges and barriers

The main challenges the program staff encountered in terms of the counsellor's competence, was **defining their professional boundaries and stepping aside when issues, that came up during the counselling, crossed those boundaries**. Many service users had issues that went beyond the scope of educational- and vocational guidance. They often had personal-, financial- and health related problems that needed the attention of other specialists. Then the counsellors usually were able to refer the clients to other specialists, but it was sometimes difficult not to get emotionally involved:

Many times I was troubled about their situation and I often worried about them after I got home from work, how their situation would evolve. I just hope I was always able to steer the client in the right direction; I find comfort in that thought. (GOAL Program Staff Member, June 2017).

The program staff also felt it was very challenging when they experienced **lack of resources** when it came to resolving the client's issues. The solution to these challenges was, more often, referrals to other specialists. In retrospect they thought it would have been beneficial to include a **social-worker** in the project, in light of the difficult circumstances that the target group experienced in many cases:

The barriers that I experienced were mainly those that involved lack of resources for my clients. Many of them had financial difficulties and then we could only help up to a certain point, that is why I have mentioned that it would have been great to have a social worker with us in the project. Also, when a client has personal problems, then the only thing we can do really is listen, again you experience lack of resources and you try to refer the client to another specialist. (GOAL Program Staff Member, June 2017).

Lack of resources did not only involve the issue of professional boundaries. It could also mean lack of appropriate programs for the service users:

The challenge with providing guidance is often something we cannot control, for example what we can and cannot offer people at that moment (GOAL Program Staff Member, June 2017).

In some cases, the program staff encountered lack of resources in terms of the clients taking the next step. Often, this had to do with the client lacking the level of readiness needed for him/her to take the next step, or the lacking of financial resources. Unfortunately, in most cases these could not be overcome during the GOAL program:

You hit a wall when the service user was not ready to participate in the guidance and refused. Also, in many cases the financial means that were needed to take the next step forward were just not there. For example, when the service user was ready and wanted to take courses but couldn't afford to do it (GOAL Program Staff Member, June 2017).

The GOAL counsellors were very ambitious towards the guidance of the target group and felt there was great responsibility involved in their roles. Many service users lacked readiness to take the next step in their educational- or occupational development. At the beginning of the project, the counsellors were sometimes concerned about the lack of progress and how that reflected on them professionally:

At first you experience pressure and responsibility, because you want to perform well as a counsellor and that is maybe an issue that you need to be aware of in general, the issue of responsibility. I cannot, as a counsellor, be responsible for what the client does and decides, but of course it matters what I do with him, so that he will benefit as much as possible from the guidance process. Then I am tested, my tools and methods and how I use them […], I experienced this mostly in the beginning, but then it changed and I started to let the process develop more freely. The plans that you make don't always work out, and you need to remember that because you're always working with people. (GOAL Program Staff Member, June 2017).

6.4   Key findings

Background and aims

Educational- and vocational counsellors in LLL centres assist people in identifying their strengths and then identifying appropriate routes for ongoing competence development. The job title 'educational- and vocational counsellor' is licensed in Iceland. A job description and ethical guidelines are in place on a national level for career counsellors, developed by the Association of Career Counsellors. Those have been based on for example IAEVG. All the GOAL counsellors are university educated. Four of five counsellors have specific qualifications in educational- and vocational guidance that relate particularly to guidance with low skilled adults and lifelong learning. The GOAL counsellors engage in personal development and training each year. They have all worked in adult counselling for at least a year. Since general competence profiles exist for career counsellors in Iceland there was a specific need to look into competences linked to servicing the more vulnerable groups in the GOAL project.

That includes dealing with more personal hindrances on the way towards decision making and taking the next steps for educational/vocational development.

Counselling activities

Four out of five counsellors in Iceland were employed full-time and one was employed part-time. Their job title and role was educational- and vocational counselling. One counsellor had a temporary contract with the employing organisation but the others all had permanent contracts. The counsellors spent on average 33 hours each week on adult guidance and counselling activities. Each counsellor spent on average 9 hours each week on GOAL project activities.

Defining competences

The necessary competence of the GOAL counsellors was defined in the beginning of the project. Among the most important ones were the ability to be able to assess the challenges and circumstances faced by the individual in a social context, set goals and organise one's own counselling work. The counsellors needed to be able to use recognized interviewing techniques, analyse and assess their own communication and the effects of their own attitudes and values. They had to be able to make individuals aware of internal and external resources and assist them in identifying solutions. They had to possess the ability to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counselling programs. Excellent communication skills, both with colleagues and clients, were essential.

Achieving high standards of counselling competence

According to the programme staff, their superiors are very ambitious and supportive when it comes to training and retraining of employees. A method group was created where specialists from social services (social workers) and career counsellors from PES informed the GOAL steering group on their methods and tools. The result of this was to focus on training in Motivational Interviewing Technique specifically and in using the Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI). Training was offered to the GOAL counsellors in motivational interviewing and they attended a workshop on Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI). According to the GOAL counsellors, the Motivational Interviewing Technique was most beneficial and they also believed the Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) was an important addition to their toolbox. The GOAL project itself has influenced competence development among the counsellors. They are more capable now in guiding individuals that belong to the GOAL target group. The challenges and the barriers that the target group faces have underlined the need for adaptability, flexibility and open-mindedness during the counselling. The counsellors have had to look at the client's issues and resources from many different perspectives, connecting needs with the appropriate tools quickly and effectively. The counsellors also feel that they gained importance knowledge about the service offered by other stakeholders and a better understanding of the system as a whole. The steering group meetings in the GOAL project turned out to be very useful and effective in regards to addressing challenges in guidance processes. It provided valuable learning and peer support for all involved.

Challenges and barriers

The GOAL target group was more challenging than the traditional low qualified adults in a sense that many of them had very long and difficult history with addiction and various health issues. However, this only applied to the Icelandic clients in GOAL. The immigrants faced serious, but different hindrances (e.g. their education might not be recognised in the Icelandic educational system and they often needed information about the roles of different institutions within the system). According to the programme staff this required them to use different approaches and interview techniques. Training in that area was very beneficial. The main challenge in the GOAL project was the recognition of professional boundaries. Many of the issues that the target group dealt with went beyond the scope of educational- and vocational guidance. In those cases, the counsellors were usually able to refer the service users to other specialists, but maintaining emotional distance was sometimes challenging. The counsellors had to face the fact that their influences on their client's actions were limited by their client's willingness and capabilities. The readiness to take the next step comes from within; no amount of counselling will change that. The presence of structural hindrances and lack of resources was also sometimes a challenge for the counsellors e.g. when the client was willing and ready to take the next step but didn't have the financial means needed to do so (i.e. courses to expensive, no scholarships/funds) or the appropriate courses were not available at the time or in the area were the client could attend them.

6.5   Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Transparency and open discussion on competences needed and competence development for counsellors is important, especially when gathering knowledge about a new target groups and learning what will work for them and their needs. Cooperation between specialists that service the target groups is mutually beneficial and can contribute to competence development. Service user's feedback obtained on regular bases can shed light on what works and what is needed.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The regulations concerning the job title 'educational- and vocational counsellor' help to ensure competences and facilitate effective service. A job description and ethical guidelines, developed by the Association of educational- and vocational Counsellors, are in place at the national level for counsellors. This may suggest that countries such as Iceland which have well-developed counselling-related policies, may be better placed to serve vulnerable clients. The high level of training and support enjoyed by counsellors in Iceland ensures competence development and has implications both within the country and across the GOAL project's five other countries.

Implications for policy

Training and lifelong learning among counsellors is important and should enjoy continued support. As the findings suggest, the sharing of knowledge and expertise between professionals is highly beneficial to everyone involved, and indirectly to service users. This suggests that the creation of a mutual forum with regular meetings where dialogs can take place between specialists, would be highly beneficial. The opportunity for peer-learning, the sharing of experience and concerns, creates support and contributes to ongoing competence development.

7 Guidance tools for low educated adults

This chapter discusses the tools which counsellors on the GOAL programme in Iceland 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

In Iceland, guidance counsellors generally use typical career/educational and vocational counselling tools such as interviewing techniques, interest inventories, portfolio work/CV, information giving, and various exercises linked to self-knowledge, information gathering and decision making, goal setting, VARK (i.e. survey that explores the client´s learning habits), exploration of occupational values, time management and validation of prior learning.

In the beginning of the project the steering group (including counsellors**) identified tools and methods from current practices which could be useful with the GOAL target group – as they were or with adjustments**. This was documented in the Experimental protocol and the Needs and Strengths Analysis. The overall aim regarding tools and methods was **to identify effective tools, adjust them as needed and train the counsellors in using them as the needs of the target group became apparent**. One of the aims was to develop group counselling offers based on participant's **needs. Group counselling offers were developed**: *Self-image and communication*, was tailored to the needs of a group of immigrants by the program site MSS. This group counselling consisted of two sessions and included discussions about cultural differences, communication traditions in Iceland, civil rights in Iceland and ways to connect with other people. During these group sessions an interpreter was present. Another group counselling session was developed by Mimir, *Strengths,*

Learning and Work. It was two sessions and tailored to the needs of young women from Poland. They all had university education, but most of them worked in housekeeping. They were able to identify with other women in similar situations and provide peer-support. They were given information about available learning opportunities, job-seeking and their strengths and interests were explored. The guidance material was in Polish and there was an interpreter present. The Program Staff at MSS also developed group counselling, based on the European project: *Resilience – A Key Skill for Education and Jobs.* The group counselling was developed for a group of young women. It was based on training and exercises in resilience, social skills, communication skills, positive mind-set and self-control.

As noted before, the counsellors in Iceland are formally trained in educational- and vocational counselling. Courses in using formalised tools are offered (e.g. interest inventories), meetings with counsellor network through cooperation with the ETSC provides insight into new tools. **For the GOAL project a method group** was established with stakeholders to bring forth and identify best practice tools with the target group. Through that work a list was made with a description of tools to use. A working day was conducted with specialists from the Directorate of Labour. The meetings with the method group provided valuable information and insights. The steering group meetings were especially useful in terms of highlighting issues related to service quality . **The tools enhanced the job of the counsellors and gave them direction when working with a group they did not have much experience of servicing**. According to the counsellors the meetings with the method group and steering groups were especially useful. The identification of effective tools and the sharing of expertise, knowledge and personal experience was very beneficial. The discourses that took place were highly valued by the counsellors:

> *I think these discussions were extremely valuable, I would like to have meetings like that every month and just get the group together, everyone sharing their experiences and concerns, and just like "have you tried this? Or, this went really well with this group" [..], it's just good to get new perspectives.* (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

As of the completion of this evaluation report, there is no formal process in place to monitor the effectiveness of tools and methods used by the counsellors. They have been reviewed and discussed informally at steering group meetings. The tools are designed to promote the quality and effectiveness of the guidance. Even so they are standardised and do not always account for individual differences. There were **no problems with the use or adaptability of tools in Iceland during the GOAL project**.

7.2   Guidance tools for low educated adults

Tool selection, development and use

All of the GOAL counsellors in Iceland had already been trained in using various tools and methods. They also had considerable experience in using these during counselling sessions, with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the guidance. The GOAL project involved new, more vulnerable

target groups. Therefore, an important part of the project was to identify and adjust, if needed, tools and methods that would be particularly beneficial when working with the target group. The GOAL counsellors both got training in using new tools and used tools they already were very familiar with:

- **Motivational Interviewing Technique** focuses on facilitating and engaging intrinsic motivation within the client in order to influence behaviour. As such, it recognizes that clients who need to make changes in their lives approach counselling at different **levels of readiness**. According to the counsellors the technique has been very useful in identifying "resistance talk", which indicates if the client is ready for change or not.
- **Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)** gives an idea about the service user adaptability skills by measuring reactions to changes that occur in life, career and education.
- **Monitoring Data Questionnaire** was used in every session, although different question depending on type of interview (i.e. initial/subsequent/exit). The questionnaire gave a detailed description of the client's current situation and motivation, reasons for seeking guidance, barriers and aims.
- **Validation of prior learning (VPL)**, methods of identifying, documenting, assessing and recognizing all the competence that the individual has gained through various activities; for example, work experience, work related learning, non-formal learning and informal learning, formal learning, social activities and family life.
- **Competence Portfolio**, is an organised collection of information that show individual development, knowledge and skills. It promotes self-knowledge, self-development and assesses general vocational competence.
- **Interest Inventory**, links personal interests to employment and educational opportunities.
- **Individual Action Plan**, an established step-by-step plan for the service users to follow in order to reach their goals.
- **Coaching** was also used to support the client in achieving his/her personal or professional goals.
- **CV making, goal setting and recording the client's competence and skills.** In every instance, these tools and methods offered an opportunity for confidence building and that was very valuable for the service users.

According to programme staff, promoting self-assertiveness and using positive psychology was very effective for the clients. **Referrals to other specialists** were also used during the GOAL project. When the counsellors realised that the scope of the service user's issues went beyond their professional boundaries, they referred them to other specialists.

The program staff thought that much of the counselling in the GOAL project had involved motivating the service users and confidence building. They felt the use of different tools had been very effective in that respect:

> *I think the Monitoring Data, in the first interview, is very effective when you want them to open up about things and highlight positive things about them, that*

maybe they hadn't thought of themselves. I also feel that the Interest Inventory is very effective, especially for the foreigners. They take a long time but you go "deep". They often make people look at things from a different perspective, and it's a reinforcement for them [..]. I also feel that the Competence Portfolio is useful in pointing out people's strengths. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

All the tools used by the counsellors aim to **strengthen the individual, build self-confidence and promote self-knowledge**. The interviews themselves, the extra time allotted to them and the use of the Monitoring Data, were highly beneficial. They provided detailed information about the client's status, circumstances and priorities. Other frequently used tools were Interest Inventory, Competence Portfolio and Motivational Interviewing. With the method group the counsellors identified tools that were valuable when working with the GOAL target group. The group counselling offers were developed with the needs of specific groups in mind. The counsellors received training in using new tools (i.e. Motivational Interviewing technique, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)) that were thought to be highly valuable when working with the target group. The counsellors all agree that these were effective tools when working with the service users and promoted self-knowledge:

What I think is really interesting, is that when you are taking the CANS survey [Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)], you can see what issue or point makes you pause, is it your self-confidence? Is it your curiosity?[..], It is basically where your pause and in my opinion that creates a great forum for discussion. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

According to the programme staff the decision on which tools to use in each case was made on an individual basis. Based on the interviews with the clients and the client´s needs, the counsellors used their own judgement and expertise when they decided which tools should be used. The use of tools was therefore based on the client's needs and capability regardless of target group and programme site.

In the follow-up survey the service users were asked if there were any tools that they found particularly useful during the counselling. The question was open-ended and the answers were back-coded and divided into relevant categories Not all clients recalled if there had been any specific tools that they found particularly useful. The tool that was mentioned most often was Interest inventory (23%), then websites and the interview itself (14%) (see table 7.1).

Table 7-1 Thinking about guidance sessions, were there any tools/activities that you found particularly useful? Iceland

	N	%
CV-making	1	5
Interest Inventory	5	23
Interviews	3	14
Paper-based tools	2	9
Websites	3	14
Nothing specific	8	36
Total	22	100

When asked about tools and methods that were used, most of the service users mentioned that the overall process was useful and helpful. They felt the counsellors were especially willing to assist them and that the interviews were motivating and helpful:

> I just felt they were very helpful and supportive. They had endless support even though they didn't know me at all, always ready to support me. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey March 2017).

It is noticeable that the immigrants in the follow-up survey mentioned different tools than the service users of Icelandic origin. In their opinion, information about websites and where to learn Icelandic was particularly useful, as well as the information they got about different institutions and their roles:

> I got many many internet sites, where I could find jobs that I didn't know existed. Also, there were girls thinking about specific jobs, and the woman helped them with all that. So I think if I have a specific question they will have an answer. So I think it was very nice. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey March 2017).

> Websites, everything was helpful and good. She offered to help me write an Icelandic CV. She told me what not to write in a CV and what was good to write in a CV. (GOAL Service User, Follow-Up Survey March 2017).

> Websites so I can learn Icelandic, I want to start training as an accountant so I can learn Icelandic legislation. I only knew about Directorate of Labour, but now I have a list of institutions that I can contact. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey March 2017).

Strengths and achievements

Establishing a **method group** with stakeholders that interact with the target group on regular basis was very effective. It was especially useful how the group was used to **bring forth and identify best practice tools** for the target group in the GOAL project. Through that work a list was made with description of tools to use. The **data monitoring template** generated by IOE for the GOAL project was particularly beneficial for the staff and the clients. It was very effective in gathering important and

detailed information about the service user. The session became very personal and it opened up conversations about what had been the client´s barriers in the past, what and where he would like to go in the future. The interview frame helped the counsellor and the client to identify the client´s possibilities together.

The sessions in the GOAL project were longer than in traditional counselling. Longer interviews were very useful and allowed for a more holistic approach. A document for informed consent was also developed for the GOAL project which was an important part of the initial interview. According to programme staff, promoting self-assertiveness and using positive psychology was highly effective for the clients. **Motivational Interviewing** technique was also very beneficial during the GOAL counselling and a valuable addition to the many useful tools they already possess. The Motivational Interviewing Technique has increased the counsellor's ability to detect the client's readiness and identify "resistance talk", which is very important while working with the GOAL target group. The **group counselling that was developed proved to be very effective and will likely be used in future counselling**. During counselling sessions, the counsellor himself is the most important tool. The competence development that has taken place during the GOAL project, through training, the sharing of knowledge and experience, learning the use of new tools and gaining more knowledge about services offered by other institutions, has made the counsellors more equipped and skilled in meeting the target group's needs.

7.3 Challenges and barriers

Through meetings and discussions with specialists experienced in working with the target group (i.e. PES, Social services) the result was to focus on the methods and tools used in motivational interviewing. With those techniques and tools it was easier to meet the participants where they were, at that point in time, and slowly address the issue of education/competence development. The methods and tools also supported an atmosphere which facilitated understanding and trust. However, in many cases the participants who were referred to the GOAL project**, did not have the appropriate '*readiness*' to focus on educational discussions**. That resulted in **high numbers of no shows** despite great efforts by counsellors in contacting and encouraging participants to come to scheduled appointments. However, it is evident that if the participant had appropriate readiness level for educational – and career counselling. The tools identified in the beginning of the project were useful and effective with minor adjustments base on individual needs. There were no noted challenges/barriers to tool development and use; the counsellors got training in using new tools that were highly effective when working with the target group. This had an overall positive effect on the counselling process. Because some of the service users were immigrants, the **access to interpreter services was important and valued**, but quality issues need to be examined with regard to the education and qualification of interpreters. Objectivity and ethical matters need attention. There are not many interpreters in Iceland, especially from some regions. Therefore, it can be difficult to ensure that quality standards are met. In some cases, Icelandic isn't even used. The interpreter talks to the immigrant in his/her native language and then translates to the counsellor in English. When this is the case, it becomes more difficult to ensure that everything is understood correctly. Also, when the same people are using the same interpreter regularly, they can develop a friendship which

can affect their objectivity, influence how they interpret information and what they emphasise. The translation and adjustment of tools is needed in light of potentially increasing numbers of immigrants using the service.

7.4 Key findings

Context and aims

In Iceland, guidance counsellors generally use typical educational- and vocational guidance tools such as interviewing techniques, interest inventories, portfolio work/CV, information giving, and various exercises linked to self-knowledge, information gathering and decision making, goal setting, VARK (i.e. survey that explores the client´s learning habits), exploration of occupational values, time management and validation of prior learning. The overall aim regarding tools and methods was to identify effective tools, adjust them as needed and train the counsellors in using them as the needs of the target group became apparent. The method group that was created in the beginning of the project was very valuable in that regard.

Tool selection, development and use

According to the programme staff the decision on which tools to use in each case was made on an individual basis. Based on the interviews with the clients and the client´s needs, the counsellors used their own judgement and expertise when they decided what tools should be used. The guidance counsellors received training in using new tools that were believed to be effective when working with the target group (e.g. Motivational Interviewing Technique, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI). Group counselling offers were developed and used successfully.

Strengths and achievements

Establishing a method group with stakeholders that interact with the target group on regular basis was very effective. It was especially useful how the group was used to bring forth and identify best practice tools with the target group of the GOAL project. The sharing of knowledge and experience was highly valued by the counsellors. Since the GOAL project allowed for more time than usual with the service user – there was a chance to use a more holistic approach and even touch on existential questions. Tools that are used during educational- and vocational guidance on a regular basis were successfully used with minor adjustments. The counsellors gained knowledge and skills in using new tools (Motivational Interviewing, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) Scale) that were particularly beneficial to the guidance process, counsellors and clients.

Challenges and barriers

During counselling, professional boundaries had to be considered. The target groups' issues and needs sometimes went beyond the scope of educational- and vocational guidance. When that happened the counsellors did their best in referring the client to other specialists e.g. psychologist, social-worker, financial advisor etc. The service user's readiness, or lack thereof, was sometimes a

barrier. In some cases, the counsellors faced lack of resources e.g. when clients were willing to take the next step, but couldn't because of lack of finance. The quality of interpreting services needs to be examined. Tools need to be translated and adjusted to meet the needs of immigrants. Useful tools need translation from Icelandic into multiple languages.

7.5   Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Gaining knowledge about the target groups' needs and the adjustments of the counselling sessions and tools is an ongoing process. Awareness of the need for flexibility and adaptability is important and the adjustment of tools, according to individual needs, is a continuing process. Networking amongst specialists can be very beneficial in this regard. The use of interpreting services is essential and needs great attention. Care must be taken and standards set in connection with competence and ethics among interpreters.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The guidance counsellors within the Adult Learning System in Iceland enjoy support with their continuing competence development, the gaining of knowledge and skills in adopting new tools and methods. The job title 'career-counsellor' is licensed in Iceland. The Master programme for career counsellors has set general and specific competence standards that influence the counsellor's skills in acquiring new methods and adjust them to the needs of the target group. Educational- and vocational guidance counsellors work in many places with adults e.g. Directorate of Labour, Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Centres, and within the formal school system. Even though they have other undertakings within these institutions, it promotes understanding about the roles and the importance of educational- and vocational guidance for the target group.

Implications for policy

During the GOAL project the sharing of experience and knowledge was considered, by everyone involved, especially valuable. This sharing promoted peer-learning, cooperation and support. This implies that it could be highly useful to develop a multidisciplinary forum where different specialists servicing the target group could come together on a regular basis. The sharing of useful methods/tools, and experiences (good and bad) could enhance the effectiveness of the professionals and organisations working with the target group.

Many of the GOAL clients were not able to take the next step because they lacked the appropriate readiness needed for them to move forward. This indicates that the formation of an efficient referral system between professionals is needed. The system could ensure that clients within the target group would be referred to educational- and vocational guidance when they have reached the

necessary 'readiness' (there might be a need to reinforce the ability to identify the appropriate readiness for learning- or career development among referral agents).

In light of increasing number of immigrants using the service, there is a need for increasing the access to interpreter services. Analysing and setting competence criteria and ethical standards for interpreting services is necessary. Translation and adjustment of various tools is needed.

8 Outreach

This chapter provides analysis of the outreach strategies adopted by the GOAL programme in Iceland, including a description of the challenges involved and analysis of the strategy's strengths and 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

In Iceland, GOAL was focused on reaching out and bringing outreach to **adults who have not previously engaged in educational-, training and employment guidance**. Although contact routes existed, there was a need to improve these and to improve visibility and accessibility, so that the service would not be lost and would be understood by clients and partners alike. The target number of clients in the GOAL projects in Iceland was 100. In the end 95 service users participated in the project.

Prior to the GOAL project, the Life Long Learning Centres in Iceland and The Education and Training Service Centre had a collaboration in place. This collaboration **has proven effective in reaching the target group**. In this collaboration the LLL-centres in Iceland have offered educational- and vocational guidance to adults that have short formal education (e.g. have not finished secondary school). The guidance has been offered both within companies (i.e. workplace guidance) and at the LLL-centres around the country. There has been, and still is, some cooperation around the country with trade unions. Their representatives have assisted the LLL-centres in establishing a connection with company managers and in promoting the guidance to workers and union members. The workplace guidance was implemented by introducing the guidance and the activities of the LLL-centres to managers within the companies. In continuation, if the managers approved, the educational- and vocational guidance was introduced to employees as well as learning opportunities etc. Interviews were offered at the workplace upon request from employees. Even though many of the employees took advantage of the services offered, **reaching out to the most vulnerable workers, those with the shortest formal education (e.g. primary education or less), has remained difficult**. That was the group of people that the GOAL project in Iceland aimed to reach, but didn't because of lack of interest among company executives.

After the economic collapse in Iceland in 2008, The Educational and Training Service Centre along with the LLL-centres started a collaboration with The Directorate of Labour that involved servicing job-seekers that belong to the target group of the adult education system. At the same time, workplace guidance decreased dramatically for a while. Recently, workplace guidance has been increasing again. The educational- and vocational guidance and the activities of the LLL- centres has also been promoted by word of mouth of former students and service users. That might have contributed to the fact that, increasingly, more clients seek guidance on their own initiative, but outreach to those with the shortest formal education has not been successful.

The cooperation with the Directorate of Labour has somewhat been ongoing since the economic collapse in 2008, but as unemployment rates went down, the demand for the services decrease. Collaboration has also been in place between different partners e.g. MSS and Samvinna, Mimir and the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre of Hafnafjordur, LLL-centres and social services. Prior to the GOAL project, these collaborations have all been informal and depending on different seasons and different parts of the country.

8.2   Outreach strategies

Overview

Most of the service users in the GOAL project in Iceland were referred by partner organisations, as 'reaching into organisations' proved to be the most effective way to get in contact with potential participants. As has been discussed, efforts at cooperation with companies did not prove fruitful. Table 8.1. provides an overview of the referral routes in the GOAL project.

Table 8-1 Referrals to The GOAL project, Iceland

	N	%
Self-referral	4	4
(Un) employment services	23	24
Social (welfare) services	16	17
Educational institutions	3	3
Educational support services	8	8
Integration/migration services	3	3
Trade union	1	1
Consultant agency	1	1
(National) prison institution	1	1
Rehabilitation institutions	19	20
Other	16	17
Total	95	100

The programme staff at Mimir made various **attempts to establish cooperation with companies and trade unions**. They had meetings with various manufacturing companies, that employ many low skilled workers, e.g. Actavis (one of the 10 biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world), Ísam (a large company in wholesales and food production), HP Grandi (one of Iceland´s largest companies in the fish industry), Nói Siríus (food production). Managers (e.g. human resource managers) from most of the companies were interested in the project, but **support from directors was not as strong**. Some felt there was no time to participate because they were busy and needed their staff at work during working hours. Potential participants felt they could not take unpaid leave to attend guidance sessions; furthermore, there was no funding available for flexible service opening hours. The programme staff, at both programme sites, also sent out e-mails to various companies in hopes of establishing a cooperation. The Program Staff felt that the lack of interest might be due to cutbacks and lack of understanding of how participating in guidance might benefit everyone involved:

> *Everyone is just really busy, there have been cutbacks and rationalization [..], and I mean, I can understand if they [the directors] say "You have to explain what's in it for us". And I understand that completely if, for example, an employee in a factory has to leave work [to attend guidance sessions]. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

According to the counsellors, most potential partners appeared very enthusiastic when they heard about the project and they seemed to be willing to take part in it, but when it came down to it nothing happened:

> *But the cooperation [...], Its just you know, people are full of good intentions and it's all very pleasurable, but then reality hits and you have to put your money were your mouth is. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

In some cases, the counsellors knew a person that could benefit from the project because of their previous involvement in courses at the program sites. In such cases, the counsellor introduced the project to that person privately and offered them participation. At the project site Mimir the counsellors made great efforts in **trying to recruit students who had previously dropped out of courses taught at Mimir LLL-centre. That was not successful and accounted for many of the no-shows in the project**:

> *We combed through a list of dropout students at Mimir, they dropped out without any explanations, and that has not gone well. We had a very long list and had reached many of them on the phone, some were positive and enthusiastic but then didn't show up [for the session]. Others refused, they were too busy at work and didn't have time or were not interested. Some were just in a dark place, and we couldn't reach them. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

Partnerships and referral processes were developed with rehabilitation centres, the social services, and PES, at each program site. The steering group meetings were very beneficial in that regard. The **majority of service users that participated in the GOAL project, entered the project via referrals by**

the GOAL program partners. It was identified as the **most effective outreach approach** during the wave 1, and consequently it became the main outreach method for the remainder of the project. The programme partner organisations had easier access to the target group. They were providing services to them and interacting with them on a daily basis. The counsellors at the programme sites established a connection with a contact within the programme partner organisations. The contact asked the potential clients if they would like to participate. If the potential clients were positive towards participation, the counsellors at the programme sites were given means to contact them. The counsellors then contacted the potential service users and set up an interview. The program staff, program partners and policymakers identified this method as the most successful way to reach out to the target group in the GOAL project:

> The aim was to find a way to reach out to the group of people that don't or haven't sought to further their education, and I think we are saying that this will not be accomplished unless there is interdisciplinary collaboration, between various systems and institutions. They [the service users] didn't seem to turn up at the program sites because of their own initiative. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).

Strengths and achievements

Even though it took time to form cooperative networks and partnerships, they led to successful referrals of service users to the GOAL project. The steering group meetings proved to be very effective in the process of developing collaboration partnerships. As a consequence, the partner organisations are now more aware of the services offered by the LLL-centres. The increased collaboration between institutions also reduced the risk of overstepping organisational boundaries. **Proximity to the service was a strength**. The location of MSS within the same building as the rehabilitation centre Samvinna, led to effective referrals of clients to the project and an overall successful and close cooperation. According to the counsellors, one of the achievements of the GOAL project was underlining the importance of cooperation of different institutions, both in regards to outreach and overall assisting and supporting the target group:

> I think the key is cooperation, that is what this group needs; a team of different [specialists], and hopefully we are one link in that chain […]. By team I mean that the individual is attending occupational rehabilitation, he meets an educational- and vocational guidance counsellor, he has sessions with a psychologist [..]. Then you are not working with just a small part, but you approach the individual holistically and that is necessary. You can't take one small piece and say "we are just going to fix this" while all the other foundations are in a mess. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

The formation of collaborative networks and referral processes, has been one of the achievements during the GOAL project. Even though the program partners and policymakers feel that the importance of cooperation was known before the GOAL project, they also feel that the GOAL project

confirmed its importance once again. They feel it would be desirable to continue this cooperation and expand it even further to include the healthcare system:

> *No, I think it was confirmed here [the importance of cooperation between various institutions], but we need to get the healthcare system more involved. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).*

Other achievement in the Goal project, was the fuelling of interest, among program partners and policy makers, in continued outreach measures, but the challenge is likely to be the allocation of financial resources for promotional materials:

> *I feel it is of utmost importance that we continue what has been started in this project, follow up on the results and continue to reach out to them [the GOAL target group], we need to present to them what is available and we need to finance that. That is usually the problem, where to find the money. (Program Partners and Policy-Makers Focus Group, April 2017).*

8.3   Challenges and barriers

The main challenge to outreach in the GOAL project was lack of commitment and readiness among the service users. **No-shows were very frequent; many potential clients booked an initial guidance session, but then didn't show up for it**. This happened also with service users that were already in the programme and were supposed to show up for a subsequent interview or a final/exit interview. **Dropouts, without any explanation were common**. According to the programme staff they spent a lot of time chasing after service users. They made phone-calls, sent e-mails and text messages. In some cases, they believed that the clients were deliberately avoiding their calls:

> *Like the other day, I had been calling and calling from one of the telephones at the centre, and then I was getting desperate because I really needed to reach him, so I tried to call him from my mobile and then he answered. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).*

In the beginning of the project this challenge was unforeseen, but after wave 1 the counsellors started to collect data on no-shows, as best they could. Even though no-show data was only collected during the wave 2, table. 8.2 gives an idea about how much effort was placed into outreach by the counsellors in the project. The table gives information about the number of interviews that had a no-show, but not the number of individuals. The same client could have been a no-show more than once and the number of service users behind the data in table 8.2 is unknown. No further information was gathered about no-shows and therefore further analysis is unavailable.

Table 8-2 Number of interviews that had no-shows in Wave 2, Iceland

	N	%
Did not show up for first interview	15	16
Did not show up for subsequent interview	36	39
Tried to book interview but client unreachable	41	45
Total	92	100

Some of the barriers to successful outreach could not be overcome. One of those was **lack of readiness** among the service users that was, in most cases, triggered by their personal and difficult circumstances:

> *You see a person with an amazing potential but she is not ready to take the steps for some reason, a reason you are not familiar with. […] this has been a lot of struggle, both in terms of reaching out to people and maintaining them within the project. And then when you think they are making progress they dropout for some reason, and you might never be able to reach them again. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).*

Lack of readiness and perseverance was common among the GOAL service users in Iceland and resulted in many dropouts in the project. Out of the 95 clients that participated in the project, 31 didn't show up for their final/exit interview. Sometimes the counsellors knew the reason why, but they just lost contact. Below are examples from the counsellors in Iceland, that show why some of the clients were unable to finish the GOAL guidance:

> *The service user came in for the first interview. I introduced GOAL and what it involved. This individual has very limited job experience due to a long history of substance abuse. He has been involved in vocational rehabilitation, but only for very short periods of time. To be accepted into that programme you have to be sober for at least three months. There is no exit-data because the client became unreachable when he fell into substance abuse again. (GOAL Program Staff Member, **Reason for Missing Exit Data** June 2017).*

> *I first got to know client when he was going through validation of prior learning. But now the Social Service referred him to the GOAL project. I introduced the project to him and he was very interested. When I took the first interview, he was still enthusiastic. I try to book another session with him, but he did not answer, or asked me to call back later when he did. Finally, I got a message stating that he was going to concentrate on getting into vocational rehabilitation, but wants to be in contact later. He claimed that he is was in a bad way, and was experiencing anxiety and depression. He wants to come for guidance sessions later, when he is „more ready ". He had fallen into heavy depression and experienced difficulties with staying active. (GOAL Program Staff Member, **Reason for Missing Exit Data** June 2017).*

*The client repeatedly forgot to show up for sessions, even if he was reminded of them the very same morning. When the client came she was very fragile and I felt like she needed a lot of support. The client did not return again. She was in a very abusive relationship and the domestic violence was visible on her face, so the client did not have the courage to be seen anywhere. She did not attend her vocational rehabilitation for a long period of time, her case was closed and the situation needs the attention of other professionals. (GOAL Program Staff Member, **Reason for Missing Exit Data** June 2017).*

Target group definition

In the very beginning of the GOAL project, the target group definition was unclear and that created a challenge. The program partners were asked to refer clients to the program, but since the target group definition was a bit roaming they experienced difficulties with the referral proves:

I felt it was very unclear in the beginning [definition of the target group]. It was complicated. They [the counsellors] were unsure about what they were supposed to do, I feel like it's been going back and forth, and as a result they have made little progress within the project up to date […]. It's one week this group, but the next week it has changed and it's another group that they are supposed to reach out to. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group May 2016).

Programme staff members also had problems with the definition of the target group. At the beginning the criteria for the target group were interpreted in a narrow way by program coordinators. Potential clients were supposed to be not only low skilled adults but also inactive. A common understanding of what 'inactive' meant or how much 'inactive' people had to be was missing and made the definition of the target group a bit nebulous. In the Icelandic context it is very rare that people are not involved in any kind of initiatives:

I mean there is nobody that is completely inactive, it is just not like that in Iceland. (GOAL Programme Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).

After a while the definition of the target group became clear and a common understanding was reached. The referral process was successful, even though potential clients still remained hard to reach and engage. Therefore, during wave 2 of the project it was decided to expand the target group definition a little. As discussed in Chapter 2, this was done to make outreach less challenging so that the counsellors would be able to meet the projects target number of 100 participants. The proportion of service users in the expanded target group turned out to be considerably smaller than expected, as it turns out only 19 service users (20%) belonged to the expanded "easier" target group (see table 2.2). According to the counsellors, they felt that mobilizing established referral connections was more effective than establishing new once. Also, new groups of people entered programs/rehabilitation within partner organisations and that led to many new clients entering the project.

Difficulties with employers

Great efforts were made to develop cooperative partnerships with companies and trade unions. Companies turned out to be hard to reach, partly because of the extensive interviews in the GOAL project. Also the research element of the project may have had an effect on recruitment from the viewpoint of the individual; they may have felt it would be time consuming or that is was too much of a commitment. The counsellors tried their absolute best to establish a partnership with the companies:

> You worry that you haven't done enough, but then you think about what you have offered. You have been in contact, offered to hold a presentation and an introduction, you have offered everything conceivable, what can we possibly do more? (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).

It was anticipated that there would be more cooperation with companies and guidance delivered to low-qualified workers. But, **as the establishment of partnerships with companies did not work out, the solution was to focus on job seekers and people on welfare through partnerships with PES and Social Services** (including rehabilitation centres). Consequently, the GOAL service users were, in some ways, a heavier group, with more complicated issues, then was initially planned in the project.

8.4   Key findings

Context and aims

In Iceland, GOAL was focused on reaching out and bringing outreach to adults who have not previously engaged in educational-, training and employment guidance. Although contact routes existed, there was a need to improve these and to improve visibility and accessibility, so that the service would not be lost and would be understood by clients and partners alike. There have been various collaborations among different partners in the past, that has promoted the adult guidance services and increased demand. The guidance has been offered both within companies and the LLL-centres around the country. But collaboration has been fragmented in a sense, that it has been informal and depending on different seasons, various agents and different parts of the country. There is a need for formalised cooperation, especially since outreach to the most vulnerable groups, those that have the least amount of formal education, has been unsuccessful.

Outreach strategies

The outreach strategy in GOAL was very different from traditional means of outreach at the programme sites, where clients usually come on their own accord. Outreach took time and was not always successful since the service users readiness and perseverance was often lacking. There were a lot of no-shows and dropouts during the GOAL project in Iceland. The attempts that were made to reach out to companies and trade unions, were unsuccessful. The most efficient way to reach out to

clients was via referrals from program partners and other stakeholders; the cooperative institutions that service the target group already and have a connection in place. Attempts were also made to reach former dropout students at the LLL-centres. Many of them account for the no-shows and dropouts in the GOAL project.

Strengths and achievements

The 'reaching into organisations' proved to be the most effective way to recruit participants. Outreach was at a very slow pace in the beginning. Therefore, the definition of the target group was expanded after the second wave of the project, but in the end there were very few (20%) participants that belonged to the 'expanded' target group. The counsellors felt it was easier to mobilise established referral routes than to create new ones. This could imply that as time passes, trust is built and the cooperation becomes more effective. So, even though it took time, forming a referral system based on collaboration with relevant partner organisations worked well and proved to be the most effective way to reach the GOAL target group. This referral system was informal, but the counsellors and other stakeholders have expressed interest and willingness to create a formal collaboration and referral system between relevant partners. Informal collaborations/referral systems are often based on the counsellors having certain contacts within different organisations. Informal relationships can be lost due to structural changes within the organisation or job changes by the counsellors. A formalised referral system is more likely to maintain referral routes and enhance their effectiveness. Establishing such a system would demand a comprehensive policy approach within the field.

The advice and assistance provided by the steering group were highly beneficial. All parties involved, program staff, program partners and policymakers, have expressed their interest in continuing the cooperation. The close collaboration during the project has led to more knowledge about the activities and services provided by the LLL-centres among the partner organisations. Also, cooperation had the benefit of reducing the risk of overstepping professional- and organisational boundaries. Increased collaboration between relevant institutions is likely to improve the service and promote a more holistic approach to the target group.

Challenges and barriers

The individuals in the GOAL target group had a number of complex, inter-related issues that made it difficult for the programme staff to motivate them to participate in the project. Issues such as various learning difficulties and disabilities (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia), financial troubles, drug addiction and other social, physical and/or psychological problems. These affected their commitment, perseverance, readiness and posed an enormous outreach challenge. During the project the counsellors spent a lot of time "chasing" after clients with the intent of maintaining them within the project. No-shows and dropouts, without any explanation, were frequent.

The criteria for the target group was, in the beginning, unclear according to the programme partners and that made referrals confusing to start with. The initially narrow definition of the target group also contributed to the difficulties in recruiting participants. Reaching out to the hard to reach proved very time consuming.

In the beginning of the project, the aim was to cooperate with companies in Iceland and deliver guidance to low-qualified workers that were employed by them. The HR departments were usually interested, but often there was not enough interest when the idea reached executives higher in the hierarchy. In the end companies found the process to excessive and were reluctant to take part, also due to the research element of the project from the viewpoint of the individuals. Since cooperation with companies was not established, the solution was to focus on collaboration with partner organisations, PES, Social Services and Rehabilitation Centres. That resulted in an effective referral process, but at the same time the service users became a 'heavier' group, with more personal issues, than was anticipated in the beginning.

Maybe the clients didn't realise the benefits of counselling. The most vulnerable groups may be too low in readiness and need softer measures in order to get closer to thinking about education. Setting up a clear process between stakeholders regarding referrals is important, creating an agreement and clear roles. Different ways to approach companies/workers need to be identified.

8.5   Key implications

Implications for future programme development

A clear and unambiguous definition of the target group is likely to facilitate recruitment and promote efficient collaboration amongst partners. The lack of commitment and readiness among the target group in the GOAL project, that resulted in many dropouts and no-shows, implies that these are important factors to take into account for future project development. It took time to form cooperation and an effective referral process with appropriate organisations, but when in place, it turned out to be the most successful way to reach out to the target group. The success of the cooperative partnership in the referral process and the usefulness of the steering group are an important implication for future program development. The lack of willingness to cooperate among companies suggests that agreements regarding collaboration, commitment and partnerships should be in place at the early stages of program development, in order to maximise the efficiency of outreach efforts. In short, all future programme developments will need to make realistic estimates of how much resource is needed to bring clients to the programme. This may involve some organisations making bigger commitments to gather a certain number of clients for the project.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

In Iceland there is lack of funds for flexible opening hours at the LLL-centres. This could be a barrier for potential service users who are employed full-time. There are no incentives in place that motivate employers to participate in a project like GOAL.

Implications for policy

Outreach services could possibly be stronger where there is top down assistance and cooperation at the policy level regarding identification of efficient services and partnerships for the target group. It was for example challenging to get into companies – managers must be interested and open the gateway to potential service users. How to get them interested is sometimes too much of a challenge for the counsellor and extra effort is needed from higher levels. Policy may be able to provide incentives for employers to invest in their staff by working with projects such as GOAL. Also, the development of a job role for someone in the counselling service to work specifically at company recruitment, could be one way of addressing this.

An efficient referral system between professionals, so that the target group is referred to educational- and vocational guidance when they have reached the necessary readiness is essential. There may be a need to reinforce the ability to identify the appropriate readiness for learning- or career development among referral agents. If the aim is to reach low-qualified workers, then there is a need to analyse the cost-effectiveness of flexible opening hours, e.g. making counselling available in the evenings and/or on weekends.

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

All but one service user participated in a satisfaction survey after their initial interview. One of the participants filled out the survey before his/her second interview. The counsellor felt it was inappropriate to ask this client to participate in the survey following his/her initial sessions because during the session very difficult personal issues were discussed and the client got very emotional.

The answers to the satisfaction survey were in general very positive during both waves. Because little change occurred between waves, the answers are not reported by wave, as it adds little information. A vast majority of clients (86%) felt more motivated after the first guidance session in GOAL. **Most clients felt more aware of their options after the first interview (76%). More than half of the clients felt the counselling helped them plan what they wanted to do next (66%). A vast majority of service users felt their next steps were either clearer or somewhat clearer after the first session (98%)** (see figure 9-1.)
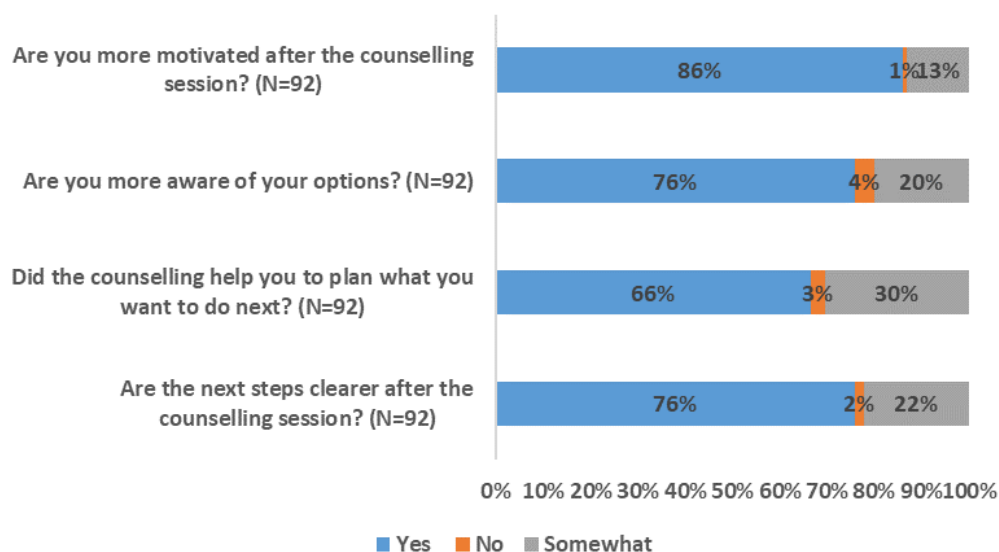
Figure 9-1 Client satisfaction Survey, Iceland (N=92)

Programme exit data

Results of the session

In Iceland there was a lot of dropout among the GOAL service users: the target group lacked commitment in many cases and no-shows to interviews were very common. Great efforts were made on behalf of the counsellors to maintain clients within the GOAL project, but in many cases it did not work out. **Out of the 95 clients that participated in the project, 31 exited the program without a final interview/exit data.** When the data collection ended in Iceland, there was one service user still receiving counselling sessions and therefore there is no exit data available for him/her. Below is an example from one counsellor, that show why one of the clients was unable to finish the GOAL guidance:

> *The client came in for the first interview and I repeatedly tried to get him into the second interview. I was later informed that the client had a lot of issues and was in a difficult custody battle. The client was vocational rehabilitation and taking a course to prepare him for further studies. The decision was made exit him, his circumstances were too difficult for him to be able to focus on guidance. I later learned that he quit the course and is devoting himself to entirely to vocational rehabilitation. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Reason for Missing Exit Data June 2017).*

Thirty-nine service users (42%) completed the planned guidance sessions, 31 clients (33%) did not complete the planned guidance sessions and there was not a specific number of sessions planned for 24 service users (26%) (see table 9.1).

Table 9-1 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions?, Iceland

	N	%
Yes	39	42
No	31	33
There was no specific number of sessions planned	24	26
Total	94	100

There were various reasons for why the guidance ended. The reasons could be more than one, but the most common reason was that the service user had completed the planned guidance sessions, chosen 46 times (48%). In 12 cases (13%), health reasons were among the reasons for why the guidance ended. In 17 cases (18%) the counsellor claimed that the reason was unknown, the client never returned. In 26 cases (28%) there were other end-reasons than those predetermined on the list. Within that category were reasons such as: the clients fell into addiction again, experienced serious trauma (e.g. domestic violence) and needed to concentrate on recovering with the appropriate help, childbirth and other personal issues. Also, within that category fell clients that didn't return to their final/exit interview. **There were 31 clients that didn't return for their final/exit interview, but even so the counsellors sometimes knew the end-reason**. This is due to the small population in Iceland and close cooperation between professionals in the GOAL project. The clients

were in most cases seeing other professionals e.g. rehabilitation consultant and social workers. Sometimes these professionals even worked in the same building as the GOAL counsellors. So, even if the clients didn't show up, the counsellors often knew about their affairs from other specialists that had contact with them. This is why the reason Not Known (client never returned), is only chosen in 17 cases (18%), not 31 (see table 9.2.).

Table 9-2 Why Did the Guidance End?, Iceland (N=94)

	N	%	%Cases
Not known (client never returned)	17	12	18
Started course	6	4	6
Completed course	7	5	7
Got job	9	6	10
Completed planned number of sessions	45	32	48
Not enough time due to family commitments	6	4	6
Not enough time due to work commitments	4	3	4
Lost contact	6	4	6
Health problems	12	9	13
Language skills too limited	1	1	1
Moved away	1	1	1
Other	26	19	28
Total	140	100	149

Thirty-one service users (33%) claimed they had taken the steps they hoped for. Twenty-one clients (22%) claimed they had partially taken the steps they hoped for and three clients (3%) felt they had not. Eight clients (9%) didn't want to answer the question and 31 clients (33%) didn't return for the final/exit session, so there no data available for (see table 9.3.).

Table 9-3 Thinking Back To Why You Came For Guidance, Have You Now Taken The Steps You Hoped To?, Iceland

		N	%	Valid%
Valid	Yes, fully	31	33	56
	Yes, partially	21	22	38
	No	3	3	5
	Total	55	59	100
Missing	Client did not return	31	33	
	I don't want to answer	8	9	
	Total	94	100	

The clients that did not fully take the steps they had hoped for, when they came for guidance, were asked what they thought had prevented them from taking those steps. The reasons could be more than one, but the most common one was health problems. Health problems were the reason in nine cases (38%); other personal reason were chosen in five cases (21%), Other reasons than those predetermined on the list were chosen nine times (38%). Among other reasons were that the clients were still attending the courses that they had started and therefore had not completed the steps

that they aimed for in the beginning, disability assessment, moving abroad, sleeping disorders and some clients didn't feel that they had set any specific goals in the beginning (see table 9.4.).

Table 9-4 What Would You Say Has Prevented You from Taking Those Steps?, Iceland (N=24)

	N	%	%Cases
Too busy at work	3	9	13
Too busy taking care of family	3	9	13
No suitable courses available	1	3	4
Age	1	3	4
Health problems	9	26	38
Lack of confidence	3	9	13
Lack of support from family	1	3	4
Other personal reasons	5	14	21
Other	9	26	38
Total	35	100	146

The service user's outcomes could be more than one for each client. **The most common outcome among GOAL service users, was that they were given information about training/education opportunities (71%).** Information about employment opportunities was an outcome among 44 service users (56%). Improved confidence was listed as an outcome in 37 cases (47%) and 27 clients (35%) claimed they had experienced other outcomes than those predetermined on the list. Among other outcomes were that the clients felt better prepared for the task of finding a job, they were better aware of their interests and next possible steps, they had increased believe in their own ability and strength, some had plans to further their education and were waiting for the process to start other had not enlisted yet. Even though some clients didn't show up for their final interview, the counsellors sometimes had information about their outcomes which they got from other sources. That is why the outcome is only unknown for 16 clients (see table 9.5.).

Table 9-5 Service Users Outcome, Iceland (N=78)

	N	%	%Cases
No progress	10	4	13
Improved confidence	37	16	47
Improved job-specific skills	10	4	13
Gained information about training/education opportunities	55	24	71
Gained information about employment opportunities	44	19	56
Entered education/training	18	8	23
Entered employment	12	5	15
Improved employment	13	6	17
Other	27	12	35
Total	226	100	290

The majority clients that were in the target group job-seeker/Unemployed completed the planned number of guidance sessions (46%), as did the majority of clients in the target group migrants/refuges/asylum-seekers (67%). Early school leavers were more likely not to complete all the planned guidance sessions (44%) and the same is true for the clients within the target group employed and low educated (63%) (see table 9.6.)

Table 9-6 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions By Target Group, Iceland

	Job-seeker/ Unemployed		Early School leaver		Asylum seeker/Migrant		Detainee		Over 50		Employed (& low educated)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	12	46	12	33	12	67	0	0	2	40	1	13	39	41
No	9	35	16	44	1	6	0	0	0	0	5	63	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	5	19	8	22	5	28	1	100	3	60	2	25	24	26
Total	26	100	36	100	18	100	1	100	5	100	8	100	94	100

Forty-two percent of women completed their planned number of guidance sessions; this completion figure represents a majority of women who had a planned number. Amongst men, there were equal percentages (40%) of those who completed their planned guidance sessions and those who did not (see table 9.7.).

Table 9-7 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions By Gender, Iceland

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	27	42	12	40	39	41
No	19	30	12	40	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	18	28	6	20	24	26
Total	64	100	30	100	94	100

The youngest clients were more likely to not complete their planned guidance sessions (47%), but within the age groups 26-35 the majority did complete the planned guidance sessions (47%), the same is true for the age group 36-55 (43%). The oldest clients were more likely to have no specific number of guidance sessions planned (60%) (see table 9.8.).

Table 9-8 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions By Age, Iceland

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	6	32	22	47	9	43	1	20	38	41
No	9	47	16	34	5	24	1	20	31	34
No specific number of sessions planned	4	21	9	19	7	33	3	60	23	25
Total	19	100	47	100	21	100	5	100	92	100

The majority of clients that were national citizens did not complete their planned guidance sessions (40%), but the majority of EU-nationals did (77%) (see table 9.9.).

Table 9-9 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions By Residence, Iceland

	National/citizen		EU national		Non-EU national with residence permit		Refugee		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	25	34	10	77	2	40	0	0	1	100	38	41
No	29	40	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	19	26	1	8	3	60	1	100	0	0	24	26
Total	73	100	13	100	5	100	1	100	1	100	93	100

Most of the clients that had not finished primary education completed their planned number of guidance sessions (60%). Most of the service users that had primary education did not complete the planned number of sessions (49%). The clients with the higher education were more likely to have completed their planned number of sessions (see table 9.10.).

Table 9-10 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions By Education, Iceland

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary education (gymnasium)		Vocational education (upper secondary level)		Post-secondary education, non-tertiary		Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	6	60	15	28	0	0	4	50	5	63	1	100	8	89	39	41
No	2	20	26	49	2	40	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	2	20	12	23	3	60	3	38	3	38	0	0	1	11	24	26
Total	10	100	53	100	5	100	8	100	8	100	1	100	9	100	94	100

Half of the clients that had full-time employment did not complete their planned guidance sessions (50%), as did most of the clients with part-time employment (43%) (see table 9.11.).

Table 9-11 Has The Client Completed All The Planned Guidance Sessions By Employment Status, Iceland

	Employed full-time		Employed part-time		Self-employed		Unemployed		Inactive		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	1	17	2	29	0	0	24	56	12	33	39	41
No	3	50	3	43	0	0	12	28	13	36	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	2	33	2	29	2	100	7	16	11	31	24	26
Total	6	100	7	100	2	100	43	100	36	100	94	100

Most of the clients that sought guidance mainly to get validation of prior learning (i.e. VLP) did not complete their planned guidance sessions (44%), but most of the clients that wanted to find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities (i.e. interest inventory) did (44%). The service users that wanted to get assistance with job seeking were more likely to complete their planned guidance sessions (71%) (see table 4. Appendix A).

Most of the service users that were referred by (un)employment services, finished their planned number of guidance sessions (52%) and the same was true for the clients referred by the social (welfare) services (44%). **All of the clients that were referred by educational institutions completed their planned number of guidance sessions and all the clients that were referred by migration/integration services did as well** (see table 5. Appendix A.).

In general, there was little difference among service users in regards to why the guidance ended. Most of them finished the planned number of guidance session and therefore the GOAL guidance came to an end. The guidance counsellors reported the reasons for why the GOAL guidance ended. The end-reason could be more than one for each participant. There were some reasons predetermined on a list of possible responses, but there was also an "other reasons" category. Among the reasons that were written in that category were: The client returned to vocational rehabilitation, the client got cancer, the service users started abusing drugs again, the client was finishing a courses and wanted to focus on that, the client wanted to focus on job-seeking, the service user just had a baby and the service user's children fell ill.

Among the GOAL service users, proportionally more men (10%) than women ended the guidance because they started a course and men (27%) were also more likely to discontinued their guidance without any explanation, than women. Proportionally more women (17%) had health problems among the participants in GOAL (see table 6. Appendix A). Overall, the clients with less education were more likely to have end the guidance without any explanation or lost contact (see table 7. Appendix A). There was no major difference between in end-reason when analysed by the service user's employment status. The only exception were the clients that were employed full-time, they were more likely to have ended the guidance due to lack of time because of job commitments (33%) or/and family commitments (50%) (see table 8. Appendix A). The service users that were referred to

the GOAL project by educational institutions were most likely to have finished the guidance sessions because they completed a course (67%) or got a job (67%) (see table 9. Appendix A).

During the final session, the service users were asked if they had achieved the objectives that they had hoped to achieve when they started the GOAL guidance. There were 31 clients who didn't show up for the final interview. **Within the group of service users that answered the question a vast majority had either fully achieved their objectives (49%) during the counselling or partially (33%).** There was no major difference between groups when service user's objectives achieved by background variables since there were so few that didn't achieve what they set out to achieve in the beginning (see table 9.12).

Table 9-12 Service Users Objectives Achieved, Iceland

	N	%
Yes, fully	31	49
Yes, partially	21	33
No	3	5
I don't want to answer	8	13
Total	63	100

The service users that didn't fully achieve their objectives were asked what prevented them from doing so. The barriers could be more than one for each service users. **The most common barrier among the GOAL clients were health problems and other reasons, both selected in nine cases (28%).** Among other reasons were lack of interest and readiness, sleeping disorder, anxiety, disability assessment and changes in the service user's circumstances (e.g. moving abroad) (see table 9.13.).

Table 9-13 Service Users Barriers to Achieving Their Objectives, Iceland (N=32)

	N	%	%Cases
Too busy at work	3	7	9
Too busy taking care of family	3	7	9
No suitable courses available	1	2	3
Age	1	2	3
Health problems	9	20	28
Lack of confidence	3	7	9
Lack of support from family	1	2	3
Other personal reasons	5	11	16
Other	9	20	28
I don't want to answer	11	24	34
Total	46	100	144

There were no key differences when barriers were analysed by target group. The job-seekers' main barriers fell within the "other" category (18%). The early school leavers' main barriers were health problems (22%) and other reasons (22%) (see table 10. Appendix A). Proportionally more men couldn't achieve their objectives due to health problems (22%) than women (see table 11. Appendix A). Health problems were the most common barrier among the youngest clients (20%) that didn't achieve their objectives, they were also among the most common barriers among the oldest clients

(20%) in GOAL (see table 12. Appendix A). Among national citizens that didn't fully achieve their objectives during the GOAL counselling, the most commonly selected reason was health problems (18%), within the group of EU nationals it was other reasons than were predetermined on the list (25%) (see table 13. Appendix A). The most common barrier among clients with vocational education (upper secondary) was health problems (50%) and other personal problems (50%) (see table 14. Appendix A).

The counsellors reported on the service user's outcomes. The outcomes could be more than one for each service user. In Iceland there were 31 clients that did not show up for their final interview/exit data. Even so the counsellors sometimes knew the outcome for the service user because of the proximity to other consultants and specialists working with the clients. Therefore, there is information about outcomes available for 76 clients. **The most common outcome was the gaining of information about training/education opportunities, selected in 71% of cases.** The second most common outcome was the gaining of information about employment opportunities (56%).Improved confidence was the third most common outcome (47%) (see table 9.14.).

Table 9-14 Service Users Outcomes, Iceland (N=76)

	N	%	%Cases
No progress	10	4	13
Improved confidence	37	16	47
Improved job-specific skills	10	4	13
Gained information about training/education opportunities	55	24	71
Gained information about employment opportunities	44	19	56
Entered education/training	18	8	23
Entered employment	12	5	15
Improved employment	13	6	17
Other	27	12	35
Total	226	100	290

When service user's outcomes were analysed by target group it was found that the most common outcome within all groups was the gaining of information about training/education opportunities. The gaining of information about employment opportunities was also among the most common outcomes in all groups. Early school leavers (44%) and migrants (50%) were more likely to report improved confidence as an outcome, although this was a common outcome among all target groups (see table 15. Appendix A). **Women were more likely than men to report the gaining of information about employment opportunities (50%) and improved confidence (42%) as an outcome** (see table 16. Appendix A). The younger clients were more likely to have reported the gaining of information about training/education opportunities then the older service users, meanwhile the older clients were more likely to report thee gaining of information about employment opportunities as an outcome (see table 17. Appendix A). The service users that had not completed primary education were most likely to have reported improved confidence as an outcome (60%), meanwhile the clients with tertiary education were most likely to have reported the gaining of information about training/educational opportunities (89%) (see table 18. Appendix A).

When the service users begun the GOAL guidance, they were asked if they liked learning new things. This was done to explore their learning attitudes. In the final/exit interview they were asked the same question again. The aim was to discover if there had been any changes in the service users' learning attitudes. Table 9.22 lists their responses. In Iceland there were missing exit data for 31 clients and one client was still receiving counselling when the data collection ended. Four clients didn't want to answer the question during the exit session. Those were omitted during the analysis of the responses. **The client that didn't like learning new things when s/he started GOAL, claimed to like it a bit at the end of the guidance.** Of the 35 clients that claimed they liked learning new things a lot at the beginning of GOAL, seven (20%) only liked it a bit when they had finished the program. **There was no significant difference between learning attitudes at the entry point and the exit point** (see table 9.15.)

Table 9-15 Service Users Learning Attitudes Exit By Service Users Learning Attitudes Entry, Iceland

	No, not really		Yes, a bit		Yes, a lot		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes, a bit	1	100	9	39	7	20	17	29
Yes, a lot	0	0	14	61	28	80	42	71
Total	1	100	23	100	35	100	59	100

The clients' learning attitudes at the entry and exit point were analysed by target groups. The clients that didn't show up for the exit session or didn't want to answer, were omitted from the analysis. **Out of the five job-seekers that said they liked learning new things a bit at entry point, three liked learning new things a lot at exit point (60%).** Out of the seven early school leavers liked learning new things a bit at entry point, five liked it a lot at exit point (71%). Seven employed & low educated like learning new things a bit at entry point, four liked it a lot at exit point (57%) (see table 19. Appendix A). The male that didn't like learning new things at entry point, liked it a bit at exit point. **Out of the 17 women that liked learning new things a bit at entry point, 12 liked it a lot at exit point (71%)** (see table 20. Appendix A). Within the age group 36-55, four service users liked learning new things a bit at entry point and three liked learning new things a lot at exit point (75%). **Within the youngest age group, 19-25, five clients liked learning new things a bit at entry point, but at exit point four of them liked learning new things a lot (80%)** (see table 21. Appendix A).

When the service users begun the GOAL guidance, they were asked if they had specific learning goals This was done to explore their learning objectives. In the final/exit interview they were asked the same question again. The aim was to discover if there had been any changes in the service users' learning objectives. (The service user's learning objectives could be more than one.) The clients that didn't have exit data were omitted from the analysis. **From the eight clients that had no specific learning objectives at the entry point, four wanted to improve their skills in general at the exit point** (50%). Out of the 23 clients that wanted to achieve a qualification of any sort in the beginning of the guidance, 11 (48%) claimed they wanted to achieve a specific qualification at the end of the counselling (see table 22. Appendix A).

When the service users joined the GOAL guidance, the counsellors were asked to record if their clients had specific career goals. This was then recorded again at the exit point. In Iceland 31 clients didn't return for their exit interview, but in some cases the counsellors knew if the service user had career goals. They were able to get information about the clients due to the proximity they had with other consultants and stakeholders that provided service to the target group. The analysis only includes clients that have both entry and exit data. **From the 39 service user that didn't have any specific job or career area in mind at the entry point, 17 (44%) knew what type of work they would like to do at the exit point and seven (18%) had a specific job in mind** (see table 23. Appendix A). Out of the 12 job-seekers that didn't have any specific career goals at the entry point, three had a specific job in mind (25%) and six knew what type of work they would like to do (50%). The detainee didn't have a specific career goal when he started the guidance, but the end of it he had a specific job in mind (see table 24. Appendix A). Out of the 26 women that didn't have any specific career goals at the beginning of the guidance, three (12%) had a specific job in mind and 16 (62%) knew what type of work they would like to do. Out of the 13 men that didn't have any specific career goals at the start of the guidance, four (31%) had a specific job in mind and one (8%) knew what kind of work he would like to do (see table 25. Appendix A). **Out of the 20 service users within the age group 26-35 that didn't have any specific career goals at the beginning of the guidance, one (5%) had a specific job in mind and 12 (60%) knew what type of work they would like to do.** Out of the nine service users within the age group 36-55 that didn't have any specific career goals at the beginning of the guidance, two (22%) had a specific job in mind and four (44%) knew what type of work they would like to do (see table 26. Appendix A).

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 clients 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. Seventy-six clients completed the self-efficacy scale when they began the GOAL guidance. Taken together, their mean score was 2.36 points. There were only 46 clients that answered the self-efficacy scale at the exit point. Their mean score at the beginning of GOAL was 2.39 points and 2.8 points when they finished the guidance. Since so many clients had such a high score in the beginning, it created a ceiling effect as many could not have shown improvements since they stated with the highest possible score of 3. Using only the self-efficacy scores among the clients that had both entry and exit data a change score was calculated. Table 9.24 represents the change in Self-efficacy scores among the service users in Iceland during the GOAL project (*exit score – entry score*). **The self-efficacy scores among the majority of clients had either not changed (63%) or risen (28%).** Using paired sample t-test revealed that the change in self-efficacy scores at entry and exit points, were significant ($t(45)=-2.86$ $p<0.05$) (see table 9.16.).

Table 9-16 Service Users Change in Efficacy Score During The GOAL Guidance

	Change Score	N	%	Valid%
Valid	-1	4	4	9
	0	29	31	63
	1	5	5	11
	2	6	6	13
	3	2	2	4
	Total	46	48	100
	Missing	49	52	
Total		95	100	

Follow-up survey

There were 22 participants in the follow-up survey in Iceland. Among other things, the service users were asked if they had set any learning/educational/training goals during the counselling. Sixteen clients (73%) said that they did and six clients (27%) that they had not set any such goals (see table 9.17.).

Table 9-17 Did You Set Any Education/Learning/Training Goals or Aims During Counselling?, Iceland

	N	%
yes	16	73
No	6	27
Total	22	100

The most common goals that the service users set were to find ways to further their education, some had the future aim of going to university. There was also the goal of finishing what the clients had once started, to graduate, to finish secondary education, to gain the entry requirements needed for a specific study.

The 16 clients that had set education/learning goals, were asked if they felt the GOAL counselling had helped them to be more confident about achieving these objectives. **All but one client agreed that the counselling had been helpful.** Six clients (38%) said that it had increased their confidence about achieving their goals a bit and nine service users (56%) a lot (see table 9.18).

Table 9-18 Did the Counselling Help You to be More Confident About Achieving Your Educational/Learning/Training Goals?, Iceland

		N	%	Valid%
Valid	Yes, a bit	6	27	38
	Yes, a lot	9	41	56
	No, not at all	1	5	6
	Total	16	73	100
	Missing	6	27	
Total		22	100	

The clients were also asked about how much progress they have made towards achieving their educational/learning goals. Only one client (6%) had fully achieved his goals and fifteen clients (94%) had made some progress, but hadn't fully achieved what they had hoped for (see table 9.19.).

Table 9-19 How Much Progress Have You Made Towards Achieving Those Goals?, Iceland

		N	%	Valid%
Valid	I have made some progress, but haven't fully achieved what I hoped to	15	68	94
	I have fully achieved what I hoped to	1	5	6
	Total	16	73	100
	Missing	6	27	
Total		22	100	

The service users were asked if they had enrolled on a course. The majority (69%) said they had and five clients had not (31%) (see table 9.20.).

Table 9-20 Have You Enrolled On A Course?, Iceland

		N	%	Valid%
Valid	yes	11	50	69
	no	5	23	31
	Total	16	73	100
	Missing	6	27	
Total		22	100	

The service users were asked if they had set any employment/career/job goals during the GOAL guidance. The majority of clients did (59%). Nine clients (41%) did not set any such goals (see table 9.21.).

Table 9-21 Did You Set Any Employment/Career/Job Goals or Aims For Yourself During Counselling?, Iceland

		N	%
Valid	yes	13	59
	no	9	41
total		22	100

When asked if they felt the counselling helped them to be more confident in achieving their goals, two clients (15%) claimed that it did help a bit, eight service users (62%) claimed that it helped a lot and three clients (23%) not at all (see table 9.22.).

Table 9-22 Did the Counselling Help You to be More Confident About Achieving Your Employment/Career/Job Goals?, Iceland

		N	%	Valid %
Valid	Yes, a bit	2	9	15
	Yes, a lot	8	36	62
	Not, not at all	3	14	23
	Total	13	59	100
	Missing	9	41	
Total		22	100	

The clients were asked about how much progress they had made towards achieving those goals. Three clients (23%) said that they had not made any progress and ten service users (77%) had made some progress, but hadn't fully achieved what they had hoped (see table 9.23.).

Table 9-23 How Much Progress Have You Made Towards Achieving Those Goals?, Iceland

		N	%	Valid %
Valid	I have not made any progress	3	14	23
	I have made some progress, but haven't fully achieved what I hoped to	10	46	77
	Total	13	59	100
	Missing	9	41	
Total		22	100	

The clients were asked if their employment or any aspect of it had changed since they started the counselling. Six service users (27%) claimed that it had, but among 16 clients (73%) it hadn't.

9.2   Qualitative findings: benefits of guidance

Client perspectives

The quotes in this section provide examples of and insights into the client's perspective on the benefits of GOAL. The quotes come from the satisfaction survey, the follow-up survey and the two face-to-face interviews.

At the end of the satisfaction survey clients were given the opportunity to comment about the counselling sessions they just had. Twenty-nine service users out of 94, chose to use this opportunity to write about their experience. Most of the clients **expressed that they were pleased with the session and that the counsellor was professional and helpful.** One service user stated in the open response box that he hoped the guidance would help him identify his strengths and interests, and how to use them to improve his situation:

> *The interview was very nice, I have delayed this for too long, but I feel very good after the session, I am more positive and open for what lies ahead. (GOAL Service User, Satisfaction Survey).*

The counsellor was impartial and helped me discover myself without pressing me, helped me realise my good qualities and what I would like to do. It was good talking to her and to have the chance to speak openly with an impartial person. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey).

Some clients felt the sessions were motivating and were excited about their next possible steps:

I am excited about this and I hope it will help me find out what I want to do and what my strengths are. It just remains to be seen. (GOAL Service User, Satisfaction Survey).

Other were pleased with the sessions in general and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the guidance:

I felt the counsellor spoke very clearly and was very enthusiastic about helping me, I also felt it was very nice talking with her and I am very pleased with the interview in every way. (GOAL Service User, Satisfaction Survey).

I am very pleased and thankful that I got this opportunity [participation in the GOAL project]. (GOAL Service User, Satisfaction Survey).

In the follow-up survey, participants were asked if the thought they got any benefits from the GOAL counselling. Most of the participants in the follow-up survey **felt the counselling was motivating and that it gave them good information.** It helped them discover their interests:

Just in every way, very good information and great help in finding myself and my longings and what I am going to do. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey).

They felt the guidance was confidence building and that it broadened their horizon:

It increased my self-confidence, I felt that hadn't achieved anything, but when we wrote it down I could see that I had achieved a lot of things. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up survey).

Just more broadmindedness, it gave me an idea about what I can possibly do and how I can achieve it. Increases one's own possibilities and shows you that there is not just one way to reach your goals. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey).

We had a translator and that helped, it [the session] gave us various information that will be very useful, improved confidence, talked about how to conduct oneself in the job-market. They also informed us about websites where we can find courses, language courses and training. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey).

The two women that were interviewed by local evaluators both wanted to take courses to improve their skills and increase their employability. The younger woman said that **she didn't have a lot of expectation towards the guidance, but she was very pleased and felt it was motivating and helpful.** She was looking into further studies and hoped to finish her secondary education and increase her employability:

I just started of course, so I don't really have a lot of experience with it [GOAL guidance], but so far I feel good about what I have done [..] I am motivated to make changes. (GOAL Service User, Face-to-Face Interview May 2016).

The older woman felt **the guidance session was a very good opportunity to talk about her circumstances.** The counsellor was friendly and supportive:

In this occasion I give her [the guidance counsellor] a full mark, she welcomed me in a particularly agreeable way and she was very patient and listened to everything I had to say. (GOAL Service User, Face-to-Face Interview May 2016).

Programme staff perspectives

According to the programme staff the guidance was most often aimed at **finding the clients' strengths and interests and motivating them**. A considerable amount of time during the sessions was also dedicated to issues such as the client's general wellbeing, prior experiences and circumstances. Due to the clients' often complicated circumstances, the sessions were usually not limited to discussions about educational- or career development. There were other personal issues that needed attention. According to the counsellors, the service users' level of readiness was lower than they anticipated in the beginning of the GOAL project:

I think that we assumed that the clients would be more ready and that it was really just a question of them not knowing about all the fantastic resources available to them. But, that was never the problem, their challenges were much more profound and complex. I always picture it like steps, in order for a person to be able to even consider educational- and career guidance, she has to be in step four or five. But most of our service users in GOAL are maybe in step three or two, even lower, some haven't even reached the ladder. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group April 2017).

According to the counsellors **a common denominator among the clients was the longing to improve their situation and better themselves**, but many clients felt that the barriers they faced were overwhelming:

That is what I am saying, everyone wants to improve themselves, everyone wants to increase their knowledge, everyone wants to grow as an individual and go through self-examination, but there are so many complexities. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group 2016).

The counsellors believed that the guidance was helping people and they usually had faith in the client's ability to change their circumstances, **but they also admit that sometimes it could be demoralising knowing that in some cases the odds were that nothing would change**:

I somehow always believe it will happen [the clients will improve their circumstances], even if it's not happening right in front of my eyes at that exact moment [..]. Basically

you always believe in people and expect and hope that they will surprise you. But sometimes, I'll admit, they can barely be helped [..]. That is the most valuable lesson I have learned in this process. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group April 2017).

According the counsellors, **the GOAL project has increased their awareness about how important the client's readiness is**. The prerequisite for changes in the service user's circumstances is that the client is ready and able to face and deal with his/her inner hindrances. The counsellors believed that finding out were the clients were in terms of readiness, pointing out ways for improvement and accepting if they are not ready to make the changes needed, was highly important. So, even if the clients didn't show progress during the guidance, the counsellors didn't feel discouraged if they felt they had managed to give the clients ideas about resources that they could build on in the future, when they have reached the necessary level of readiness:

> *I think we are just more aware that people are just in different places in their lives, and you have to respect that; this individual is here right now, we will give him the time he needs. What feels most discouraging is if I sense that I have not managed to plant any seeds. Because even if the client doesn't jump straight from my office to sign up for a course, I think it's most important that we have shared a connection, so when that person is ready to take on the work that needs to be done, she feels that she can return [to guidance]. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group April 2017).*

Other stakeholders' perspectives

In the beginning of the GOAL project the program partners and policymakers expressed a positive outlook towards it and thought the increased collaboration would be valuable to everyone involved:

> *I have been to the steering group meetings and I think they have been successful, information has been gathered and I think that has been very interesting for everyone involved. Counsellors from different organisations have been sharing their experience. So, I really think that this can be beneficial for us all. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group May 2016).*

The stakeholders had **concerns about raising the service users' expectations**. Knowing how their circumstances were often highly complex and how many of them would not be able to concentrate on learning, even if they wanted to:

> *I also felt that the aim of reaching out to this group of people, giving them all these interviews with the intention of sparking their interest towards further education. I wanted us to consider in the very beginning that for these people financial support is the main issue. I felt we needed to be aware of the fact that we were possibly motivating them to take part in something that would never actually be a real possibility. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group May 2016).*

Stakeholders in the GOAL project felt the project had underlined **the need for an extensive cooperation between institutions that service the target group**. Collaboration between systems was also thought to be highly important. There is a need for connecting systems, the healthcare system needs to be more involved:

> I think that this [the GOAL project] has given us an opportunity to build bridges between systems and different organisations, I think that is highly important [...]. In my opinion that is one of the main results that we are seeing. (GOAL Program Partners, Focus Group May 2016).

Stakeholders think the project has had certain benefits, the increased collaboration, the competence development and the client's satisfaction with the counselling, but if it is to continue, issues concerning **funding** will need to be analysed:

> It's a really good project, but it's limited. I think it's great that it helped some individuals, but if it is to continue we need to look at where the funding will come from [..]. Does the Adult Education System pay, The Formal Education System or Social Service? Where do we allocate money for people that are in these difficult circumstances? (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).

The stakeholders believe the GOAL project has had a **positive effect on outreach**. It has shown that the most successful measure to reach the target group is via referrals from organisations that service the target group on a regular basis. In GOAL, guidance was provided to service users that would not, under other circumstances, seek guidance. Some stakeholders expressed concerns about not being able to maintain the accomplishments made in the project because of lack of funding:

> You have found these ways to reach this group of people that you haven't been able to reach before. These people came to sessions, but they wouldn't have if the project hadn't been running. That is an accomplishment for sure. But if everything stops now, the project is over and then this group of people is back to square one. We won't reach more people within the group because the project is over? (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).

The counselling in the GOAL project has shown that the target group often needs many interviews and even extended time during these interviews. In light of that, **extra allocation of funds** is necessary if the adult education system is to continue its service to the target group:

> The issue is the number of sessions, follow-up for a certain period of time to try and motivate him [the client], because he has difficult circumstances and you will need to see him fairly often, then it's just like in any institutions, you need funds and if we don't have it than we can't do it. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).

9.3 Key findings

Key outcomes

The service users that participated in GOAL were in most cases **pleased with the guidance**, judging by the satisfaction survey and the follow-up survey. They thought the guidance was **motivating, helpful and supplied them with useful information**. They also felt the counsellors were dedicated to helping them, competent and professional. The clients within the GOAL target group experienced difficult circumstances and in most cases lacked the initiative and confidence that was needed to improve their situation and thus achieve measurable outcomes such as enrolment in adult education courses. Even so, there were positive (often smaller) outcomes. Most of the clients had been informed about pathways regarding educational- and career development, learning- and employment opportunities. They experienced increased confidence and had a better idea about their future aims. Immigrants within the project were very grateful for the help and the information they got. For most clients the self-efficacy remained the same or improved. Their attitudes to learning improved and they were more aware of their learning/career goals. Most of the clients achieved their aims during the counselling, fully or partially. In the follow-up survey most of the participants felt the guidance had increased their confidence in achieving their goals.

But there were also many hindrances, e.g. lack of time, various health problems and a lack of readiness needed to take the next steps. The **immigrants were proportionally more likely to have completed all guidance sessions, which might imply higher level of readiness** within that group and different needs or hindrances.

The counsellors felt the guidance had been successful in many ways. They clients seemed to be pleased, they were better aware of their options and new what services were available to them. Even if they didn't have the necessary readiness to take advantage of opportunities for educational- or career development, the counsellor felt that they had **planted seeds** that the clients would be able to grow in the future should they reach the appropriate level of readiness. Pushing people that aren't ready can bring out undesired outcomes. Finding out where the service users are in terms of readiness and taking the guidance from there, being patient and considerate is the most important lesson counsellors learned in connection to service user's outcomes.

Stakeholders felt the project brought about positive outcomes. Service users seemed to benefit from the guidance. The increased cooperation brought about by the GOAL project, has had positive effects on service users. Interest and willingness for continued cooperation has been generated. However, stakeholders expressed concerns about lack of financial resources and appropriate pathways for the target group, raising hopes that could not be met due to structural barriers.

Important outcomes in the GOAL project were often at the systemic level, particularly in terms of counsellors' increased competence and the development of collaborative partnership and networks. The enhanced collaboration between different organisations increased the possibility of providing a holistic and well-integrated set of services that address the complex, inter-linked needs of vulnerable adults.

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Strengths and achievements

The main strengths in terms of service user's outcomes was **increased motivation and confidence within the group.** The clients were more aware of the services available to them and pathways for educational- and career development. Many have begun working towards their competence development – be it personal or professional. Counsellors competence, the effective collaboration with stakeholders, knowledge and information sharing about the target group, available recourses and appropriate methods/tools, have all contributed to positive service user's outcomes.

Challenges and barriers

The main challenges in connection to service user's outcomes were **inner hindrances and structural barriers.** Lack of commitment and readiness resulted in fewer clients being able to take advantage of the opportunities available in education/career development. Resolving complex personal issues, that go beyond the scope of educational- and vocational guidance, are in most cases a necessary prerequisite for further educational/career development. Despite increased access to quality guidance services and counsellor's competence, lack of available financial resources (e.g. scholarships, subsidy of learning expenses) create a structural barrier when the clients reach the appropriate level of readiness to take the next steps.

9.4   Key implications

Implications for future programme development

Future programs need to be aware of the importance of **service user's readiness**. The target group needs both longer and deeper guidance sessions; this has implications for project's needs in terms of time, personnel and funding. Various complicated issues demand collaboration between different specialists. A coalition agreement regarding referrals is needed in the beginning, since referrals from relevant organisations seems to be the most effective way to reach the target group. A network that allows for the sharing of knowledge and experience is highly valuable. Attention has to be given to counsellor's competences in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. Expectations in terms of client's outcomes need to considered. Just coming to an interview can be a huge step for an individual from the target group. Building confidence, registering into a hobby course, having someone listening and reacting on individual's issues can be highly valuable and lead people forward. It takes time and patience.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The regulations concerning the job title 'Career-counsellor' help to ensure competences and facilitate effective service. Quality standards are in place. This suggest that guidance counsellors in Iceland are capable in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. Training and lifelong learning among counsellors is important and should enjoy continued support.

The lack of financial resources (such as scholarships, subsidy of learning expenses, a system of payment distribution for courses at the LLL-centres and other educational institutions) creates a systematic barrier for those service users who are ready and willing to take the next step and engage in further education. Lack of funding limits available options for these services users who want to enrol in education. Lack of formal cooperation between stakeholders and LLL-centres before GOAL leads to less knowledge about available resources/services.

Implications for policy

The difficult and complex circumstances that the target group faces demand cooperation between different stakeholders that service the target group. More cooperation on policy level/ministry level could aid the building of a formalised network and the crossing of institutional borders. Policy making needs to be focused on working towards holistic services for the target group.

The sharing of knowledge and expertise between professionals is highly beneficial to everyone involved, and indirectly to service user's outcomes. This highlights the need for creating a mutual forum, based around regular meetings where dialogs can take place between specialists. An efficient referral system between professionals is needed, so that the target group is referred to educational- and vocational guidance when they have reach the necessary "readiness".

The target group needs deeper guidance including a focus on their readiness; this requires that funding is available for longer and more interviews. Appropriate educational/career pathways and suitable funding needs to be available. Lack of readiness also implies that patience is needed on the part of policy makers in regards to service users' outcomes. Improving outcomes for vulnerable adults will require a long-term vision that involves development of counsellor competences and organisational partnerships. Systemic developments could increase the likelihood of clients taking the initial 'small' steps required to develop greater confidence, agency and control, which are necessary prerequisites for taking subsequent, larger steps such as enrolling in adult education courses.

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 Iceland. 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

The establishment of an **Advisory committee** set the stage for information sharing between service providers linked to the target group. When the content of the GOAL project was introduced at the first meeting for the Advisory group, each representative in the group presented how they were providing services to the target group. It became evident that a lot of services was already being provided through social services, PES, Prison services, etc. Then the discussion of how to define the target group became the main focus and how the GOAL project could add to existing services. The Advisory group consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; Ministry of Welfare; Directorate of Labour; Association of Local Authorities in Iceland; The Red Cross; the Organisation of adult learning; Prison Services; Director of Mimir Lifelong learning centre; Director of MSS Lifelong learning centre; and the Director of the Education and Training Service Centre. The Advisory group provided feedback and advice on project developments, assisted with connections to local stakeholders regarding recruitment of participants, discussed challenges and assisted with finding solutions, provided information about services in place. **The information sharing** has been of great value for setting up connections between stakeholders and cooperative partnerships. Improved cooperation has led to more knowledge, for everyone involved, about available resources for the target group. Relevant partners are more aware of each other's services, and referrals have been facilitated as a consequence of increased collaboration. The lack of funding for education for the target group remains in some cases a hindrance in the guidance process through limiting options.

The method group was established to **identify useful tools and methods**. Career counsellors received additional training in using new methods. The training was effective in building competences suitable for the target group (i.e. motivational interviewing and Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)). The counsellors became more skilled in meeting the target group's needs. Information sharing and the sharing of past experiences between counsellors and other cooperative partners, was key in counsellor's competence development. Access to educational guidance has been increased and cooperative partnerships on the issue initiated and/or strengthened. There has been more time allowed for interviews and the interviews have been more in-depth. Tailor made group counselling was developed. **The GOAL project in itself has been a learning process and a valuable exercise in competence building**.

The establishment of new **outreach** routes was challenging, at least with employers. Cooperation with companies was not established, despite great efforts. The solution was to focus on outreach

routes that the cooperative partnerships could provide. Partnerships with other service providers, social services, rehabilitation centres and PES, were established and referral processes developed. The successfulness of referrals from partner organisations, highlight the importance of **collaborative networks**. Even so, it was still challenging to get the target group to commit to the guidance and get them into scheduled interviews. There were many 'no shows'.

The aim was to build cooperative partnerships in order to bring educational- and vocational guidance closer to the target group. A related aim was to work towards a more holistic approach in guidance in general nationally. In these regards, a lot has been accomplished in the last 2 years and valuable learning has taken place; this needs to be developed further through cooperation of the involved stakeholders. At the time of writing, the Advisory committee was preparing a national seminar where issues would be further analysed and decisions made on the next steps after the GOAL project.

Projects like GOAL have the potential to bring important stakeholders together on an issue that needs to be addressed in order to increase the quality of services and the understanding of the target group. Such collaboration can increase cooperation and provide new insight into working methods on all levels.

10.2 Challenges and barriers to high quality services

In the beginning of the project there was a need to make sure that it was clear that the GOAL project was to add to and complement existing services with a focus on educational guidance (not take on the roles of those other providers). It was also necessary to identify the competences required to meet the target groups' needs prior to guidance taking place, since the target group was dealing with more difficult personal problems than anticipated. That was partly due to the fact that efforts that were made to develop cooperative partnerships with companies and trade unions weren't successful. (This meant that GOAL recruited fewer employed individuals than anticipated, and focused more on individuals with problems that limited their employment opportunities.)

One of the aims of the GOAL project was to reach out to companies that employ many low-qualified workers and trade unions that already have access to that group of people. Companies turned out to be hard to reach, partly because of the extensive interviews in the GOAL project. Also the research element of the project may have had an effect on recruitment form the viewpoint of the individual. There was in general lack of interest among company executives:

> I know they have also had presentations for corporate representatives from human resource management departments. I remember that one of them was especially positive and everyone got really hopeful. He talked to the counsellors for a long time, but when it reached his supervisor it was not an option [cooperation in terms of referrals to the project]. So, that is what we are seeing. The middle management is often interested but there is a lack of support higher in the hierarchy. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group May 2016).

The solution to lack of cooperation with companies, was to strengthen cooperative partnerships with other organisations (i.e. PES, Social Services). This resulted in the fact that the target group was

dealing with more difficult personal problems than anticipated. The clients had complicated circumstances and lower readiness levels than was expected in the beginning. In these circumstances there was a need for different methods and tools (e.g. motivational interviewing). The need for building trust and consideration was heightened during the counselling. The interviews demanded more time to adapt the tools to the needs of clients: the counsellors needed to be highly sensitive towards individual clients' needs and be able to adjust tools in accordance with those needs, both quickly and effectively:

> *I see bit of a difference whether the client is referred from one of the initiatives on behalf of the social services, or if he is referred by someone else. In these initiatives [social services] the addiction plays such a big part and then we need completely different methods when dealing with that. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

It can be difficult to work on motivating people towards opportunities that may not be reachable in the foreseeable future, based on his/her situation or system hindrances e.g. personal readiness, finances or appropriate educational pathways. Even if the service users have the appropriate readiness, lack of time and financial resources are commonly an issue in adult education:

> *The need for some kind of a system of scholarships, like we see in other countries, has been discussed many times. But we don't have anything like that here, and studying while having a full-time employment and even supporting a family, like is often the case with adults, is extremely difficult. This needs to be examined, a system with scholarships or student loans, or some sort of financial support. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group April 2017).*

In light of the complicated issues that the GOAL target group was faced with, professional boundaries were tested. The counsellors found themselves assisting in matters that went beyond the scope of educational guidance.

Funding is not only a hindrance for the clients to participate in learning, but also when it comes to developing and using effective tools. Some tools cost money and it then has to be decided who will pay for them. The clients, especially the more vulnerable ones, do not necessarily have the means to pay for a survey that he/she might find useful:

> *It's like with CANS [Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)], we took a course and learned how to use it, it's a really good tool and I would like to use it during guidance. But when we were going the buy a "package" then there were money issues, it costs money and then we need to sell it. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).*

10.3 Strengths and achievements

Service user perspectives

In addition to the primarily quantitative interviews conducted as part of the follow-up survey, local evaluators conducted two in-depth qualitative interviews with clients. The two service users that were interviewed in-depth as part of this latter process did not have high expectations of the service. They reported that they did not know what to expect but at the same time were very pleased to be participants in the project and were excited to see where it would take them. They didn't feel there was anything that could be done to improve the service. In their opinion it was very good exactly the way it was.

In open text responses to the satisfaction survey clients expressed that they were very happy with the guidance and they felt that the counsellors were enthusiastic and eager to help them. They wrote very positively about the service:

> *I felt the counsellor spoke very clearly, was enthusiastic and eager to help me. I also felt it was very easy to talk to her and I was very pleased with the entire interview. (GOAL service user, Satisfaction Survey).*

They felt the information they were given was useful and the counsellors were very professional. The counsellors spoke clearly, were understanding and explained the next steps that they would take.

> *Very clear, explained my options and next possible steps. Very happy. (GOAL service user, Satisfaction Survey).*

In the follow-up survey clients were asked if they at any time felt they didn't want to return to the guidance sessions. All the participants denied ever feeling that way. They were in general very pleased with the guidance:

> *I grew more confident after I talked to someone. Like these goals that I set, they are good for me. I made good decisions about my future. (GOAL Service User, Follow-up Survey).*

The two service users that were interviewed by local evaluators were both satisfied with the services; one of them was especially happy with the length of the session. The counsellor was very thoughtful and gave her all the time she needed to discuss her issues. The other interviewee was in general very pleased to be a part of the GOAL project and felt she received quality service.

The interviewees did not have any comments about how the service could be improved, largely perhaps because levels of satisfaction were very high. Neither did they make any comments about possible weaknesses of the service. One of the interviewees felt the service was very helpful and effective, especially how previous experiences and needs are examined and taken into account when the next steps are decided. With the help of the guidance counsellor she felt empowered and abler to set her life in motion. The other interviewee thought that the main strength of the service was the length of the guidance sessions and the thorough attention given to clients. The duration of her first

interview was two hours and she felt that the extra time allotted to the interview was a sign of helpfulness and enthusiasm on behalf of the counsellor. Both of them thought that some of their friends could benefit from being a part of the GOAL project, but they had not recommended the service to others.

Programme staff perspectives on guidance quality

The program staff felt the methods and tools that were mapped with the method group, were highly valuable. The sharing of information and the increased cooperation between professionals during the GOAL project was beneficial to everyone. **These factors all contributed to improved guidance quality**. The counsellors became more aware of available resources offered by other service providers and more knowledgeable about the aims of different service providers (including projects), existing services and efficient guidance approaches. Together these elements have added to counsellor's competence and in turn guidance quality.

Partnerships and referral processes were developed with other service providers, the social services, rehabilitation centres and PES. These partnerships provided participants for the GOAL project. The counsellors feel that maintaining these partnerships and strengthening them in the future will increase the quality of the service. A referral system that works in both directions (e.g. if the needs of the service user go beyond the scope of educational- and career guidance), will benefit the clients and increase service quality for the target group:

> I believe totally that the key is cooperation [between different service providers]. That's just the way it is, that's just exactly what this group of people needs, it's a team of various professional and hopefully we are just one link in that chain. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

Various efforts were made to reach out to the target group on program sites, through relevant organisations and service providers. Referrals from other service providers appeared to be the most appropriate way to recruit participants for GOAL. As the experience at the program site MSS has shown; the proximity to other service providers and potential clients is very valuable and enhances the effectiveness of the service:

> Yes, it is easier to reach them [individuals that are receiving services with other "in-house" service providers], I think because it's in the same house. We bump in to them on in the hallways and can remind them of their session. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).

The counsellors in GOAL were all professional career counsellors. Quality measures were in place (European Quality Mark in development). Guidance processes were in place, tailor made group counselling was developed. The information exchange that took place through the method group provided valuable learning. Mapping and discussions of methods and tools was a useful exercise (method group, steering group, advisory group meetings etc.). The program staff received training in the use of tools/methods that were identified as being particularly effective in servicing the target

group (i.e. motivational interview technique, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) Scale). The counsellors also felt the Monitoring Data Questionnaire, was especially useful tool in gathering detailed information about the client, starting the conversation and sparking interest:

> *With me it's the use of the Monitoring Data Questionnaire, if the clients are particularly passive and it is just really difficult to start talking with them, then I have used the Monitoring Data and then they slowly start talking and then you can continue. (GOAL Program Staff, Focus Group May 2016).*

Programme staff also felt that clients were pleased with the service and found it useful. They perceived that many clients were grateful for the attention and the assistance, and in many cases felt more optimistic. The guidance provided them with more self-confidence towards further competence development – be it personal or professional:

> *You can sense that they are pleased with them [the guidance sessions], there was one client that said he would much rather come and see me instead of his psychologist, you know people are benefitting from them, but we can't generalise based on just a few participants, but it's clearly doing some good. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).*

In some cases, clients were not in the position to take advantage of learning opportunities because of personal issues e.g. addiction, financial situation and other health issues. In these situations, an effective partnership with other organisations that might have solutions to these issues could increase the quality of the service. The programme staff are also **concerned about raising the client´s expectations and then not having the resources or the means to fulfil them** (e.g. funding, scholarships, appropriate educational pathways).

According to programme staff, there was a need for having short intervals between the sessions. The client needed to feel that things had been set in motion and a process had begun. This was sometimes difficult to achieve because of all the time spent on gathering new clients and holding on to those that were already in the project:

> *Because as soon as they have been to the first session, then there can't pass too much time in between interviews., If that happens, important things during the first interview will be forgotten. Therefore, the interview process needs to be massive, with short intervals. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group May 2016).*

According to programme staff there have not been any issues concerning the programme partners that have had a negative effect on the service quality. The programme partners have been very positive and helpful. As a result of the GOAL project the services of educational – and vocational guidance are better known among other partners that service the target group. Referrals have been made:

> *One of the positive things that have resulted from the project, in my opinion, is increased understanding about what educational – and vocational guidance has to*

offer [among other service providers], I have had conversations with other consultants and they were saying that they had a client that was interested in further education, and if they could send him my way so I could examine that with him. So I feel that we have established stronger connections [..]. Because, in my experience not everyone comprehends what educational – and vocational counsellors do, and I think we have spread the message. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

The counsellors feel that the awareness of the service user's readiness is highly important for the quality of the service. The Motivational interviewing technique has proven very useful in identifying 'resistance talk'. The vulnerable position of the target group underlines the need for consideration and tactfulness. Pressuring the client, if he is not ready is not likely bring about desired results:

For instance, the client that I ran into at the supermarket. I had been trying so hard to reach her and then we met in the supermarket and the poor thing just almost ran out! That was awful and I started to think; am I just increasing her anxiety level or am I helping her […] and I think we have to really think about this; when are you helping someone and when are you just pushing them to take steps they are not ready to take. (GOAL Program Staff Member, Focus Group April 2017).

Partner and policy stakeholder perspectives on guidance quality

In the very beginning of the project some program partners and stakeholders felt that the aims of the project weren't clear enough. They already knew that the readiness of the target group would be lacking in many cases. They felt they had already established outreach to the target group and didn't know what could be gained by new outreach measures:

I felt the aims weren't clear in some ways, they were talking about finding new ways to reach out to the target group, and that they wanted to apply new outreach methods. But, we that have worked with the group on regular basis, we knew that these are not the people that stand in line waiting for a chance to study. So we knew that already [..] but everyone was preoccupied about where we would find these people so they could be referred to the program sites. So I felt right in the beginning that the aims belittled the fact that we already had a connection. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group may 2016).

During meetings with the program partners and the steering group, roles of different partners were made clearer. The added value of GOAL guidance to an already existing service was emphasised. The program partners were very interested in their clients' wellbeing and ready to take part in something that might benefit them. So, with close cooperation, and mutual interest and understanding, these feelings of overstepping boundaries were overcome.

Lack of financial resources is a challenge when the aim is to deliver quality service to the target group. it appears to be **one of the main shortcomings within the adult education system**. Lack of

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available scholarships, student loans and financing the courses can create a serious barrier to quality service, especially when dealing with more vulnerable groups. Lack of financial resources effects the available options and opportunities and therefore the possibility of delivering quality service:

> *I think it is fundamental and very important that we keep in mind, every step of the way in a project like this, it's an ethical issue really; that we are embarking on a journey with people, and the goal is to ignite their interest in further education by point out possible pathways and opportunities, but at the end of the day they will face financial barriers. We don't have scholarships and most formal educational pathways are expensive. (GOAL Program Staff and Policymakers, Focus Group May 2016).*

> *The option of payment distribution is not available, but at the same time we would, of course, really want to be able to reach out these students and offer them these courses, but they can't pay for their studies in advance, all at once. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).*

Maintaining professional boundaries was a challenge for the program staff, and some stakeholders also felt that the services provided to clients in the GOAL project were on the verge of crossing professional boundaries. If counsellors **repeatedly take on issues that go beyond their professional boundaries, knowledge and expertise, the quality of the service may be affected.** Some stakeholders felt the service in the GOAL project went beyond the scope of educational – and career guidance. They felt the guidance counsellors were not supposed to offer countless interviews, where personal issues and barriers were the focus of the session. Other believed that it was something that needed exploring in continuance of the project:

> *Is it the role of the education- and career counsellors to be a kind of a therapist? I mean 15 interviews and support, almost like being a care worker. Is that what it takes to get people to further their education [..]. And is it their role to go so deep? (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).*

The program partners, policymakers and stakeholders were in agreement that the GOAL project had positive effects on cooperation between different agents. They felt that the value of a strong and established partnership was already known, but the GOAL project highlighted it. **A structured partnership between different stakeholders, that service the target group, effects service quality indirectly through improved knowledge and access to resources, systematic referrals and overall competence development.** Interest was generated towards maintaining and strengthening what has been accomplished in GOAL, with the final aim of improving service quality:

> *Maybe it's a question about an overall policymaking in adult guidance and at the same time means of financial support, or the possibility thereof. At least the focus needs to be on finance in some way, financial support, subsidizing courses and then where the service should be and what it should entail, because we are dealing with people that need professional help, educational- and career guidance is not some*

magic word for this group. (GOAL Program Partners and Policymakers, Focus Group April 2017).

10.4 Key findings

Implementation and aims

The establishment of an Advisory committee set up the stage for information sharing between service providers linked to the target group. The information sharing was of great value for setting up connections between stakeholders and cooperative partnerships. Improved cooperation has led to more knowledge, for everyone involved, about available resources for the target group which increased the quality of the service provided in GOAL and hopefully future guidance services. The method group was established to identify useful tools and methods. Career counsellors received additional training in using new methods. The training was effective in building competences suitable for the target group. The cooperative partnerships and the counsellors' training affected the counsellor's competence and indirectly the service quality.

Strengths and achievements

The guidance services at the LLL-centres have gained more cooperative partnerships linked to the target group and received valuable information on what is in development among other service providers and on the situation of the target group. Ministries are more aware of the benefits of guidance. The sharing of information and knowledge has an indirect effect on service quality.

The methods and tools brought forth in the project were of high quality and the counsellors were trained in using them (i.e. Motivational interviewing and Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) scale). It was very useful for the GOAL counsellors to have an opportunity to get a glimpse of the toolbox of other specialists working with the more vulnerable groups. Internal factors are in many cases the main barrier towards progress, but the training in motivational interviewing has proven to be very effective in detecting those issues and defining and dealing with "resistance talk". The notion of identifying high and low resistance can also assist in regard to referrals to other professionals. Learning how to use new methods and tools was very competence-building for the counsellors and promoted service quality.

The counsellors were all professional career counsellors. Quality measures were in place (European Quality Mark in development). Guidance processes were in place, tailor made group counselling was developed. When participants were recruited/referred to educational guidance the tools turned out to be useful as long as the 'readiness level' was appropriate. In general, the guidance in GOAL has proven to be satisfactory for the participants. It has provided them with more self-confidence towards further competence development – be it personal or professional.

The information exchange that took place through the method group provided valuable learning. Mapping and discussions of methods and tools was useful to everyone. Increased knowledge of the target group is beneficial to all stakeholders and enhanced service quality. Through GOAL,

partnerships have been strengthened. The Program partners and other stakeholders share a willingness to formalise and develop the partnership further, with the aim of working towards a more holistic high-quality service for the target group.

Challenges and barriers
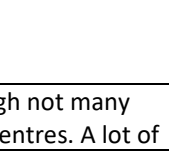
The role of the counsellors and other actors in reaching out to the target group within companies remains a challenge. More cooperation is needed. The baseline for referrals to educational- and vocational guidance needs to be clear in regards to readiness of the client. There are policy and institutional borders that need to be discussed and addressed. It takes a lot of effort to get people joined in creating holistic high-quality services and a lot of commitment on behalf of policy makers. Lack of available financial resources can decrease the quality of the service by limiting options and opportunities for the service users.

Baseline and progress across GOAL's five intervention strategies

Table 10.1 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 10-1 Summary of the quality of different aspects of the GOAL programme in Iceland

ASPECT OF PROGRAMME OR POLICY		LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT
Partnerships and networks	*Start of GOAL*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		There were some relatively longstanding partnerships in place, but they were informal and the partners themselves did not have a good understanding of the importance of adult guidance or the potential added value of GOAL. Also, they were worried about GOAL 'coming into their territory' or taking away some of their future funding opportunities.
	End of GOAL	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		By the final year of the programme, partners were much more receptive to the importance of guidance in general and to the role of GOAL in meeting the particular needs of the target group. However, employers never committed to the project, and the partnership network remained informal – it did not get embedded into the formal policy structure.
Counsellor competences	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

		The counsellors in the GOAL project all have a university degree in the subject. Quality standards exist and training and networking is in place as well as opportunities for lifelong learning, but there was a need for an introduction to methods and tools especially useful for the target group of the project as well as expanded networking with other specialists.
	End	_____x___ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Counsellors had discussions with specialists in the method group (social services and PES) and went through training in motivational interviewing as well as in using the Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI) tool. The project itself as an arena for learning has increased counsellor competences.
Outreach	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Reaching out to the target group identified in GOAL had been very challenging. The group was not responding to outreach measures such as field visits (companies and other) and advertisements.
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Through established partnerships (which took some time), processes for referrals were developed which worked in many cases, but it needs to be noted that there were a lot of "no shows" for scheduled interviews. There is a need for refining the referral process in cooperation with specialists from other stakeholders. There is also a need to identify ways to establish partnership with employers/companies. Personal, financial and systematic barriers need to be addressed.
Tools	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Various tools existed and counsellor's competences were in place professionally as a base for servicing the new target group.
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Counsellors got an opportunity to adjust existing tools, develop group counselling measures for the target group and received training in motivational interviewing and in using the Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI). These methods and tools have added to their expertise regrading guiding the GOAL target group (vulnerable groups – job seekers, social welfare).
Overall service quality (holistic judgement)	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		The quality of the career guidance delivered was high although not many services were being provided to this target group at the LLL centres. A lot of

		services were in place, however, through the PES, social services and other actors focusing on personal issues. The focus there is not always directly on educational/competence development. Outreach measures were not as successful as expected. More cooperation needed between stakeholders.
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		Cooperative partnerships have been strengthened through sharing of information and knowledge towards a common understanding of the current situation. Partnerships need to be formalized and clear processes for cooperation (e.g. referrals) need to be developed. The aim should be holistic services for the user through common efforts.
Policy interest and/or support	*Start*	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		There was a lack of discussion and policy making linked to joint cooperation on educational guidance for vulnerable groups – a link between service providers and educational opportunities.
	End	_____x_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
		There is more understanding in regards to the different roles of stakeholders in forming successful partnerships. Interest and commitment has generated towards structuring the system based on common policy making. The results of planning and structuring policy will be based on the efforts of key policy makers.

10.5 Key implications

Implications for future programme development

When developing a high-quality service for a target group with highly complex needs, every aspect of the service/programme must take those needs into account. The program has to be flexible and responsive to client needs. The approach needs to be holistic, which focuses on the individual rather than a specific topic. Counsellors may also need to develop competences that enable them to meet the target groups' needs effectively. Strong interpersonal skills are required, as are flexibility and responsiveness to client's needs. The sharing of knowledge and resources between programme partners is important, as is establishing cooperation with other professionals that service the target group. A system of referrals needs to be in place. Extensive knowledge of recourses among other service providers is likely to enhance service quality and program effectiveness. Ethical issues need to be addressed; in particular, it is not appropriate to build hopes and expectations among service users that are impossible to fulfil due to lack of structural and financial support for these clients.

Policy implications

Implications of policy

The lack of a financial resources (e.g. scholarships, subsidy of learning expenses, payment distribution for the cost of education) creates system barriers at the policy level when the clients

have reached the appropriate readiness to take the next steps in educational-/career development. There is a lack of transparency on links between the adult educational system and the formal educational system in Iceland. Lack of financial means and transparency affects the quality of the service.

The quality of the career guidance delivered is high, although not many services were being provided to this target group at the LLL centres. A lot of services are in place, however, through the PES, social services and other actors focusing on personal issues. The focus there is not always directly on educational/competence development. More cooperation is needed between relevant stakeholders and different ministries representatives if the aim is to deliver a holistic high-quality service to the target group.

Implications for policy

The sharing of knowledge, experience and effective methods/tools between different professionals that service the target group and its positive overall effect on competence development, service quality and outcomes, has implications on the policy level.

Closer cooperation is needed at policy level, with a focus of meeting the needs and facilitating the development of the individual. Roles of and borders between actors need to be discussed in this context, and it is important to overcome the influence of policy silos, in which the focus is not the whole individual but different policy areas. An efficient referral system between professionals, so that the target group is referred to educational- and vocational guidance when they have reach the necessary 'readiness'. The aim should be high quality holistic services for the service users through common efforts. Service user feedback obtained on regular bases can shed light on what works and what is needed to both maintain or enhance quality services.

Counsellor's, program partner's and stakeholder's worries regarding raising expectations in the face of resource scarcity highlights an important policy issue. One role of policy is to increase individual agency and raise human capital; however, a complementary policy responsibility is to support the development of systems that enable individuals to act on their agency and take advantage of (and further develop) their human capital. The target group needs deeper guidance including a focus on their readiness, this requires that funding is available for longer and more interviews. Financial resources and appropriate learning-/career pathways need to be in place and attainable. These system barriers need to be resolved if the aim is to offer an effective and high quality service to the target group.

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?

The programme processes of GOAL in Iceland focussed on five intervention strategies:

1. Establishing/improving networks and partnerships with relevant organisations.
2. Identifying specific tools that were particularly useful when working with the target group.
3. Identifying the competences needed for counsellors when working with the target group.
4. Identifying successful outreach methods.
5. Quality of guidance service for the target group.

The first intervention strategy was to **improve/strengthen existing networks, or establish new ones**. Based on connections through representatives in the Advisory group, cooperative partnerships were established or strengthened. A so called 'cooperative description' was developed to describe the cooperation between the LLL centres and the partners, which basically revolved around assisting with recruitment through referrals. The formation of collaboration was successful and most service users in the GOAL project were referred by cooperative partners. Willingness and interest towards continued cooperation has developed. When this report was written (October 2017) the cooperation was still informal, but both program partners and policy makers have expressed the need to

formalise networks and even expand them to include representatives from the healthcare system. Links between services have been made, but time needs to be allotted to information sharing, discussions and developments. Referrals need to be developed with a focus on quality and relevance (i.e. the service user's readiness)

Identifying useful tools was the second intervention strategy. Through the SWOT analyses, methods and existing tools were identified and needs clarified. A method group was established that included experts from the cooperative partners. The experts and project counsellors shared best practice tools and methods which were described in a brief handbook. Not all the methods that were described in the handbook were used in GOAL, but the counsellors received training in *Motivational interviewing technique* which proved to be of high relevance when working with the target group. The counsellors also received training in the use of the *Career Adapt-Ability Inventory* (CAAI), that focuses on measuring the career maturity of individuals. This training received by the counsellors was a direct result of the cooperation with the method group. *The Monitoring Data Form,* used to collect information during the sessions, proved to be very useful and made the sessions more thorough. According to the counsellors this was a new and very useful tool. Group counselling measures were developed based on needs and individual guidance was based on needs assessment.

The third intervention strategy was the **identification of the competences needed for counsellors when working with the target group.** The training in using new tools (Motivational Interviewing Technique and Career Adapt-Ability Inventory) and adapting existing tools, contributed to increased counsellor competence. The GOAL project highlighted competences needed to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, in particular the need for excellent interpersonal skills and the elevation of tolerance and consideration. The identification of the client's readiness is also highly important. The recognition of personal boundaries is an important factor when working with vulnerable groups with complex and difficult circumstances. The sharing of knowledge and expertise during the method group and steering group meetings was highly valuable and contributed to counsellors' competence development. The GOAL project itself was a great contribution to counsellors' competence building.

Identifying **successful outreach methods** was the fourth intervention strategy. Outreach took time and was not always successful since the service users' readiness and perseverance was often lacking. There were a lot of no-shows and dropouts. The anticipated cooperation with companies wasn't realised and the most successful outreach method was the referrals of clients to the program by cooperative partners. The networks created through the Advisory group, method group and local stakeholder's groups were of high value for opening channels between the target group and educational- and vocational guidance at the LLL centres. These results highlight the importance of cooperation between relevant stakeholders and the need for refining the referral process in cooperation with specialists, in relation to necessary readiness of the service user. The location of the program site MSS in the same building as Samvinna rehabilitation centre has shown that proximity of service providers to potential clients has a positive effect on outreach. There is also a need to identify ways to establish partnerships with employers/companies. Policy may be able to provide incentives for employers to invest in their staff by working with projects such as GOAL. Also, the development of a job role for someone in the counselling service to work specifically on company recruitment, could be one way of addressing this.

The fifth intervention strategy was **quality of guidance services** for the target group. The enhanced networking and increased collaboration between relevant stakeholders contributed to the quality of the service. Relevant stakeholders became more aware of the service offered by the LLL-centres, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise promoted peer-learning and enhanced service quality. The identification of successful tools and methods when working with the target group augmented service quality, as did the identification of the competences needed when working with the target group. The referral agent's and counsellor's ability to identify the client's level of readiness is key to providing successful and high quality service. Systematic barriers, e.g. linked to financing of participation in education, were evident and affected the quality of guidance through limiting the options/opportunities of individuals taking part in the guidance sessions. The GOAL project has highlighted the target groups' need for a holistic approach, that takes into account their often very complex and difficult circumstances. Providing a quality guidance service for the clients within the target group entails close cooperation between various specialists. The approach has to be holistic in the sense that the individual's needs and circumstances have to be dealt with as a whole; this often requires different specialists. Looking at one piece of the puzzle is not likely to bring about the desired results.

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

The service users that participated in GOAL were **in most cases very pleased with the guidance judging by the satisfaction survey and follow-up survey.** They thought the guidance was motivating, helpful and supplied them with useful information. They also felt the counsellors were dedicated to helping them, competent and professional. Most of the clients had been informed about pathways regarding educational- and career development, learning- and employment opportunities. They experienced **increased confidence and had a better idea about their future aims.** For most clients the **self-efficacy score remained the same or improved.** Their attitudes to learning improved and they were more aware of their learning/career goals. Most of the clients achieved their aims during the counselling, fully or partially. In the follow-up survey most of the participants felt the guidance had increased their confidence in achieving their goals. But there were also many barriers, e.g. inner hindrances: lack of time, various health problems and lack of the readiness that is needed to take the next steps. Structural hindrances included lack of: financial resources, scholarships, subsidised learning opportunities, and availability of appropriate educational pathways.

The counsellors felt the guidance had been successful in many ways. They clients seemed to be pleased, they were better aware of their options and knew what services were available to them. **Finding out where the service users were in terms of readiness and taking the guidance from there**, being patient and considerate were the most important lesson that counsellors learned in connection to service users' outcomes.

Stakeholders at partner organisations also felt the project brought about positive outcomes. They felt the service users seemed to benefit from the guidance. They also felt the increased cooperation brought about by the GOAL project could enhance the quality and effectiveness of the service provided to the target group. Interest and willingness for continued cooperation was generated.

Stakeholders expressed concerns about lack of financial resources and appropriate pathways for the target group, and about raising client hopes that could not be met due to structural barriers.

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

The expectations in GOAL were the **establishing/strengthening of cooperative partnerships and networks**, in order to bring educational- and vocational guidance closer to the target group and to work towards a more holistic approach in guidance in general nationally. These expectations were partly met, but not fully. The establishing and strengthening of cooperative partnerships was highly valuable, but it was expected that more formal partnerships would be made which could be sustained after the project – although some of them are already at that stage as a result of the GOAL project. The program partners and other stakeholders have expressed enthusiasm and willingness to formalise the cooperation and the networks brought forth in the project with the aim of promoting the target groups general wellbeing and working towards a more holistic service for the target group. Even so, collaborations are still informal.

The identification of **effective tools and methods** with the help of the method group was extremely valuable and exceeded expectations. The appropriate and most effective tools and methods when working with the target group were identified and used with great success. The counsellors were trained in using them and these tools were a valuable addition to their existing toolbox. They will be used in the future and make the counsellors more capable of meeting the needs of the target group. The use of the Monitoring Data Form, provided by the IOE, proved highly beneficial and the counsellors expressed interest in continuing its use when servicing more vulnerable adults. The tools already used by the counsellors during sessions were all used successfully with minor adjustments. Group counselling measures were developed based on the needs of the target group and proved to be effective in confidence building; they also provided opportunities for peer-support among participants.

The GOAL project's contribution to overall **counsellor's competence development** fully met expectations. It was anticipated that the counsellors, who all had experience in working with low-qualified people and held either a diploma or a Masters degree in guidance, would have enough competences in meeting the GOAL target group's needs. It became evident that there was a need for a more sensitive approach during sessions with the target group. In that regard, *Motivational Interview Technique* became highly relevant in order to build trust and be able to proceed in line with what the individual could actually cope with. The counsellors received training in using effective tools and methods (i.e. motivational interviewing technique, Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI)). The sharing of experience and knowledge in meetings with the steering group and the method group provided peer-learning, professional support and promoted the counsellors' competence development. The GOAL project in itself, the experience and the challenges associated with it, was also competence building.

Expectations in regards to **Outreach** were partly met, but not fully. Expectations regarding cooperation with companies and the delivering of guidance to low-qualified workers were not met.

For these expectations to be met in the future, challenges include maintaining and reinforcing cooperation between relevant stakeholders and finding ways to establish cooperation within the private sector. Lack of cooperation in the private sector, despite great efforts, has shown that policy support is needed. As a result of the cooperation with companies not being successful, the focus was turned to referrals based on links through representatives in the Advisory group (e.g. social services, PES, rehabilitation centres). That was not the intention from the start, and in many cases the counsellors felt highly challenged since many of participants were dealing with very difficult circumstance in their lives. The close cooperation with stakeholders from the Advisory group and specialists among cooperative partners provided more knowledge about the target group based on information sharing, experience from the project and research results. It was anticipated that the representatives in the Advisory group would be committed to the project and those expectations were met. As of the completion of the evaluation, they were highly involved in planning a national conference where policy implications will be discussed and suggestions made towards improvements.

Expectations regarding **high quality guidance services** were met in most ways. The increased collaboration between relevant stakeholders resulted in a more extensive knowledge about the target group and the services provided by other organisations/institutions. Relevant stakeholders are more aware of the services offered by the LLL centres. These factors contributed to service quality in the sense that relevant partners became more aware of the resources available to the target group within the system and could draw on that when meeting the target group's needs. The identification and use of effective tools and methods, development of group counselling measures, longer interviews with focus on the client's needs and circumstances, contributed to service quality. The service users' overall satisfaction with the guidance is an indicator of the quality of the service. The counsellors' education and frequent participation in retraining, the training they received in using effective tools and methods during the project influenced the service quality. Lack of financial resources were the main hindrance in providing high quality guidance services to vulnerable adults. In GOAL, some service users, that had the appropriate readiness, were not able to take advantage of educational opportunities due to lack of financial means and support: no scholarships/grants or student loans were available. Lack of funds is a serious system hindrance.

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

The effective cooperation, among the national steering committee, advisory group, method group and local stakeholders, was very useful and led to the identification of quality issues that needed to be addressed. The main factors on programme level were:

- Increased cooperation between stakeholders.
- Peer learning/mentoring linked to discussions in the steering group and partnership, the sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience.

- The identification of effective methods, tools and the overall competence development among counsellors.
- Increased knowledge of the target group benefitted program participants, partners and counsellors.
- The development of referral systems.
- Tailor made group counselling and the extended time allotted to sessions.

In general, both representatives of companies in Iceland and the GOAL target group **lacked sufficient information about the adult educational- and guidance system**. Counsellors need to be aware of that many service users in the target group have very little information about what opportunities they have, about the value of their current knowledge, and about where to start and how to continue.

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

Lack of financial support linked to education for people who are on social welfare was a hindrance in some cases. It became a barrier once they had overcome their personal hindrances and were ready and able to focus on education. Raising expectations through educational and vocational guidance can therefore be **ethically challenging for counsellors**, when the case is that the person cannot move into desired educational pathways because of lack of financial support.

The national standards concerning the education and training of educational- and vocational guidance counsellors, influences the quality of guidance provided within the adult educational system as a whole.

As the research results have shown, **proximity of the service to potential service users and partners is beneficial**. There is a need for more governmental support related to outreach to employers and disadvantaged target groups. Policy needs to support increased visibility of the service provided by the LLL-centres to potential clients and other stakeholders, and to **create initiatives for cooperation within the public- and private sector**.

Cooperative partnerships were established/strengthened in both program sites and referral processes developed. Consensus was reached among other service providers about the benefits of cooperation, sharing of knowledge and peer learning. There is a **need to formalise the cooperation and referral systems on the policy level** – organisational roles and boundaries need to be clear.

The formation of the Advisory group was of high importance with regards to opening up channels between different service providers and sharing information about different target groups. **Further networking and policy development needs to take place based on the GOAL project findings** – for example with more focus on combined efforts regarding referrals and outreach in companies. It would be beneficial to **explore how the government can support outreach linked to lifelong learning in companies**. Further, cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Industries and Innovation needs to be further established in

the area of guidance and lifelong learning. Measures have been taken towards describing actions for a more holistic guidance system in the country in a report written by Capacent 2015 for the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture[15]. The report has not yet been reviewed by the ministry.

11.6 Implications and recommendations for future programme development

A clear and unambiguous definition of the target group is likely to facilitate recruitment and promote efficient collaboration amongst partners. A coalition agreement regarding referrals is needed in the beginning, since referrals from relevant organisations were the most effective way to reach the target group. The lack of willingness to cooperate among companies suggests that **agreements regarding collaboration, commitment and partnerships should be in place at the early stages of program development, in order to maximise the efficiency of outreach efforts**. Future programs should try to get employers' commitment earlier, for example by including employer representatives and/or trade union representatives on a steering group. In short, all future programme developments will need to make realistic estimates of the extent of resources needed to bring clients to the programme.

When developing a high quality service for a target group with highly complex needs, every aspect of the service/programme must take those needs into account. The program has to be flexible and responsive to the client's needs. The resolution of difficult personal issues is often a necessary prerequisite before the client can focus on further education. Therefore, a system of referrals between specialists (e.g. social worker, financial advisor, psychologist, physical therapist, educational- and vocational counsellors) is needed if the aim is to meet the client's needs and provide high quality services. The **approach needs to be holistic**, which focuses on the individual rather than a specific topic, e.g. job vs learning.

In the GOAL project the use of interpreting services was essential. It became apparent that there was a need to consider **standards in connection with competence and ethics among interpreters**. This has implications for future program development.

Transparency and open discussion about **competence needs and competence development for counsellors** is important, especially when gathering knowledge about a new target group and learning what will work for them to meet their needs. Gaining knowledge about the target groups' needs and the adjustments of the counselling sessions and tools accordingly was an ongoing process in GOAL. **Service users' feedback** obtained on regular bases could shed light on what works and what is needed. The sharing of knowledge and resources between programme partners and other stakeholders was mutually beneficial, but time needs to be allotted for mutual understanding and planning of developments. It is crucial that the benefits of a partnership to those involved are clear.

Many clients in the target group lacked initiative and needed a detailed action plan concerning next steps. This might imply that the sessions need to be on a short interval (i.e. occur relatively

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[15] Kjartansdottir, G. B., Gudmundsdottir, A.G., Thorsteinsson, A., Masdottir, D., Helgadottir, H., Josefsson K.G., Asgrimsdottir M.L. (2015). Foundation for policy in Educational- and Vocational Guidance in Iceland [Grunnur að stefnu um náms- og starfsráðgjöf á Íslandi]. Reykjavik: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

frequently) to keep the clients motivated. Future programs need to be aware of the importance of **service user's readiness**. The target group needed both longer and deeper guidance sessions; these factors have implications for project's needs in terms of time, personnel and funding. Expectations in terms of clients' outcomes need to be considered. **Ethical issues need to be addressed**; it is not ethical to build hopes and expectations among service users if these are impossible to fulfil due to structural issues.

Building and formalising cooperative partnerships/networks with set timelines for meetings and aims, can be very beneficial in order to develop **holistic guidance services**. Trust needs to be built between partners. There are policy and institutional borders that need to be discussed and addressed. It takes a lot of effort to get organisations and staff joined in creating holistic services and a lot of commitment on behalf of policy makers including all ministries working on issues related to the competence development of the target group. Otherwise the services will remain fragmented. Sustainability issues need to be addressed in the beginning and long term goals defined. From the Icelandic experience, cooperation on all levels is imperative.

11.7 Policy implications and recommendations

Implications of policy

The experience from the GOAL project revealed that there is a **lack of policy and networking within the field of educational- and vocational guidance and other guidance support services linked to the GOAL target group**. Services are offered in various settings, based on different policies and legal frameworks. They are in many cases not connected, which leads to a fragmented system for the individual. There is a lack of transparency on links between the adult educational system and the formal educational system in Iceland which makes transition between systems complicated and ambiguous for individuals. The lack of financial means and transparency affects the quality of the service.

Policymaking linked to joint cooperation on educational guidance for vulnerable groups is lacking. The **link between service providers and educational opportunities is fragmented**. LLL guidance policies – policies on adult education and validation of prior learning – need to better intertwined and accessible (advertised/promoted). This was addressed by the GOAL project through the formation of the Advisory group. Discussions in the Advisory group shed light on the services provided in different areas by various partners (i.e. social services, PES, Red cross, Prison services, adult education). **Institutional borders can create a barrier**. There is a need for more collaboration between ministries. The **absence of a connection with the healthcare system** is possibly reducing the potential success of the service for the target group and creating barriers.

Lack of financial resources (e.g. scholarships, student loans, payment distribution, subsidy of learning expenses) make it difficult for the target group to take advantage of educational opportunities; this forms a **large hindrance within the adult educational system at the policy level**. That also applies to the lack of appropriate educational pathways and support for more vulnerable groups. The target

group generally has low-income, and deals with various social and personal hindrances that need to be addressed before entering educational guidance. In Iceland there seems to be a lack of funding for **flexible opening hours at the LLL-centres**. This could be a barrier for potential service users who are employed full-time. These system barriers need to be addressed at the policy level.

The guidance counsellors within the Adult Learning System in Iceland have access to support with their continuing **competence development**, e.g. the gaining of knowledge and skills in adapting new tools and methods. The job title 'career-counsellor' is certified in Iceland. The Masters programme for career counsellors has set general and specific competence standards that influence the counsellor's skills in acquiring new methods and adjusting them to the needs of the target group. The Icelandic Association of Educational- and Vocational Guidance has adjusted ethical guidelines from the IAEVG (International Association of Educational- and Vocational Guidance). Educational- and vocational guidance counsellors work in many places with adults, e.g. Directorate of Labour, Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Centres, and within the formal school system. Even though they have other undertakings within these institutions, this promotes understanding about the roles and the importance of educational- and vocational guidance for the target group

There is increased quality focus and co-operation between the Educational and Training Service Centre (ETSC) and Lifelong Learning centres on the basis of the European Quality Mark accreditation system. Specific standards for career guidance services are being developed and tested in the context of the EQM. **This contributes to the delivery of high quality guidance**.

Implications and recommendations for policy

The target group needs **deeper guidance including a focus on their readiness**; this requires that funding is available for longer and more interviews for the group. Appropriate educational/career pathways and suitable financial resources need to be available to the service user. **The issue of funding and subsistence among adult learners needs to be addressed within governmental policymaking.** Most adults have financial commitments and can't afford loss of income while studying. This creates a serious system barrier that needs urgent attention at the highest policy levels.

Training and lifelong learning among counsellors is important and should enjoy continued support. As the findings suggest, the sharing of knowledge and expertise between professionals is highly beneficial to everyone involved, and indirectly to service users. This suggests that the creation and formalisation of a mutual forum with regular meetings where dialogs can take place between specialists would be highly beneficial. The opportunity for **peer-learning, the sharing of experience and concerns**, creates support and contributes to ongoing competence development in the field.

In light of the increasing number of immigrants using the service of the LLL-centres and other guidance services, the **need for interpretation services** has increased and is likely to increase even more in the future. It is important to analyse and set competence criteria and ethical standards for interpretation services, translation and adjustment of various tools.

Many of the GOAL clients were not able **to take the next step** because they lacked the appropriate readiness that was needed for them to move forward. This implies that the creation of an efficient and formal referral system between professionals is needed. The system could ensure that clients within the target group would be referred to Educational- and Vocational Guidance when they have reached the necessary 'readiness'. Lack of readiness also implies that **patience is needed on the part of policy makers with regard to service user outcomes**; this requires an understanding of the complex circumstances that the individuals face, and the large amount of time it is likely to achieve outcomes such as completing an education course. Improving outcomes for vulnerable adults will require a long-term vision that involves development of counsellor competences and organisational partnerships.

Through meetings with the advisory group it became evident that a lot of services are being offered to the more vulnerable groups through PES, social services, rehabilitation centres, the Red Cross, prison services and adult learning. There is an existing network around the cooperative partnership of PES and Social Services – cooperation between actors, however, needs to be strengthened and formalised in order to avoid fragmentation and 'dead-ends' for the service users (e.g. because of lack of funding and appropriate educational opportunities). **Combined efforts could lead to higher quality in the overall aim towards active citizenship and competence development.** There is a need for policy to support the expansion of existing networks to include more actors and cooperation aiming at the needs of the target group, i.e. a more holistic career guidance service. **Joint policymaking on behalf of the Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and Ministry of Industries and Innovation can initiate and steer the process of connecting systems** (e.g. healthcare system, welfare system, educational system, industry-and employment system) that will facilitate and enhance the quality and effectiveness of services offered to more vulnerable groups in the future.

Outreach services could possibly be stronger where there is **top-down assistance** and cooperation at the policy level regarding identification of efficient services and partnerships for the target group. **Policy may be able to provide incentives for employers** to invest in their staff by working with projects such as GOAL. The development of a job role for someone in the counselling service to work specifically at company recruitment could be one way of addressing this.

Guidance measures need more focus in general and needs analyses of target groups, based on the experience of frontline staff (educational and vocational guidance personnel), which can provide information on systematic barriers that need to be resolved in order to improve pathways and progress.

A policy-level network involving a range of ministries (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Industries and Innovation) needs to be further developed to take the policy lessons learned in the GOAL project further. Most of the GOAL clients (i.e. vulnerable low qualified adults) face complex circumstances that need the attention of different professionals. The results need to be formulated in an action plan to be implemented in close cooperation with various organisation and specialists. The readiness concept needs attention on all levels.

Appendix A

Table 0-1. **Service Users' Main Reason for Seeking Guidance By Employment Status, Iceland**

	Employed full-time		Employed part-time		Self-employed		Unemployed		Inactive		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	5	71	3	43	2	100	11	25	14	40	35	37
To validate existing competences/prior learning	0	0	1	14	0	0	6	14	2	6	9	10
Interest assessment	1	14	1	14	0	0	7	16	7	20	16	17
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	1	14	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	9	5	5
To find financial resources for learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	9	4	4
To get assistance with job seeking	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	30	4	11	17	18
To get assistance with writing a CV	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
Because of personal issues	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	2	29	0	0	3	7	2	6	7	7
Total	7	100	7	100	2	100	44	100	35	100	95	100

Table 0-2. **Service Users' Main Reason for Seeking Guidance By Education, Iceland**

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary education (gymnasium)		Vocational education (upper secondary level)		Post-secondary education, non-tertiary		Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	3	30	26	48	2	40	2	25	2	25	0	0	0	0	35	37
To validate existing competences/prior learning	1	10	7	13	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	9	9
Interest assessment	3	30	8	15	2	40	2	25	1	13	0	0	0	0	16	17
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	0	0	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
To find financial resources for learning	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	4	4
To get assistance with job seeking	1	10	2	4	0	0	4	50	3	38	1	100	6	67	17	18
To get assistance with writing a CV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	1
Because of personal issues	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	1	10	3	6	1	20	0	0	1	13	0	0	1	11	7	7
Total	10	100	54	100	5	100	8	100	8	100	1	100	9	100	95	100

Table 0-3. **Service Users' Main Reason for Seeking Guidance By Target Group, Iceland**

	Job-seeker/ Unemployed		Early School leaver		Migrant/Refugee /Asylum seeker		Detainee		Over 50		Employed (& low educated)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	9	35	16	44	3	17	0	0	1	20	6	67	35	37
To validate existing competences/prior learning	5	19	2	6	0	0	0	0	1	20	1	11	9	9
Interest assessment	6	23	8	22	1	6	0	0	1	20	0	0	16	17
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	0	0	4	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	5	5
To find financial resources for learning	0	0	3	8	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
To get assistance with job seeking	4	15	1	3	10	56	1	100	1	20	0	0	17	18
To get assistance with writing a CV	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Because of personal issues	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	2	8	2	6	1	6	0	0	1	20	1	11	7	7
Total	26	100	36	100	18	100	1	100	5	100	9	100	95	100

Table 0-4. **Has The Client Completed All the Planned Guidance Sessions? By Main Reason for Seeking Guidance, Iceland**

	To explore educational opportunities		VLP		Interest Inventory		Assistance with learning techniques		Find financial resources for learning		Assistance with job seeking		Assistance with writing a CV		Personal issues		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	10	29	2	22	7	44	2	40	1	25	12	71	1	100	1	100	3	43	39	41
No	12	35	4	44	5	31	3	60	1	25	2	12	0	0	0	0	4	57	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	12	35	3	33	4	25	0	0	2	50	3	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	26
Total	34	100	9	100	16	100	5	100	4	100	17	100	1	100	1	100	7	100	94	100

Table 0-5. **Has The Client Completed All the Planned Guidance Sessions? By Referring Organisation, Iceland**

	Self-referral		Employment services		Social services		Educational institutions		Educational support services		Migration services		Trade union		Prison institution		Rehabilitation institutions		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	1	25	12	52	7	44	3	100	2	25	3	100	0	0	0	0	5	26	6	38	39	41
No	1	25	7	30	6	38	0	0	2	25	0	0	1	100	0	0	7	37	7	44	31	33
No specific number of sessions planned	2	50	4	17	3	19	0	0	4	50	0	0	0	0	1	100	7	37	3	19	24	26
Total	4	100	23	100	16	100	3	100	8	100	3	100	1	100	1	100	19	100	16	100	94	100

Table 0-6. **Service Users' End Reason By Gender, Iceland**

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not known (client never returned)	9	14	8	27	17	27
Started course	3	5	3	10	6	9
Completed course	5	8	2	7	7	11
Got job	6	9	3	10	9	14
Completed planned number of sessions	31	48	14	47	45	70
Not enough time due to family commitments	5	8	1	3	6	9
Not enough time due to work commitments	2	3	2	7	4	6
Lost contact	4	6	2	7	6	9
Health problems	11	17	1	3	12	19
Language skills too limited	1	2	0	0	1	2
Moved away	1	2	0	0	1	2
Other	19	30	7	23	26	41
Total	64	100	30	100	94	147

Table 0-7. **Service Users' End Reason By Educational Level, Iceland (N=94)**

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary education		Vocational education (upper secondary level)		Post-secondary education, non-tertiary		Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not known (client never returned)	1	10	11	21	2	40	2	25	1	13	0	0	0	0	17	18
Started course	1	10	4	8	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	6	6
Completed course	1	10	2	4	0	0	1	13	3	38	0	0	0	0	7	7
Got job	1	10	3	6	1	20	3	38	1	13	0	0	0	0	9	10
Completed planned number of sessions	6	60	22	42	1	20	4	50	4	50	0	0	8	89	45	48
Not enough time due to family commitments	0	0	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	6	6
Not enough time due to work commitments	0	0	3	6	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Lost contact	1	10	4	8	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
Health problems	2	20	8	15	0	0	1	13	1	13	0	0	0	0	12	13
Language skills too limited	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Moved away	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	3	30	14	26	2	40	3	38	2	25	1	100	1	11	26	28
Total	10	100	53	100	5	100	8	100	8	100	1	100	9	100	94	100

Table 0-8. **Service Users' End Reason By Employment Status, Iceland**

	Employed full-time		Employed part-time		Self-employed		Unemployed		Inactive		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not known (client never returned)	1	17	0	0	0	0	9	21	7	19	17	18
Started course	1	17	0	0	0	0	2	5	3	8	6	6
Completed course	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	5	14	7	7
Got job	2	33	2	29	0	0	2	5	3	8	9	10
Completed planned number of sessions	1	17	6	86	1	50	25	58	12	33	45	48
Not enough time due to family commitments	2	33	0	0	1	50	2	5	1	3	6	6
Not enough time due to work commitments	3	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	4
Lost contact	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	2	6	6	6
Health problems	1	17	1	14	1	50	3	7	6	17	12	13
Language skills too limited	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1
Moved away	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
Other	1	17	0	0	1	50	10	23	14	39	26	28
Total	6	100	7	100	2	100	43	100	36	100	94	100

Table 0-9. **Service Users' End Reason By Referring Organisation, Iceland**

	Self-referral		(Un) employment services		Social services		Educational institutions		Educational support services		Migration services		Trade union		Prison institution		Rehabilitation institution		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not known (client never returned)	1	25	5	22	4	25	0	0	3	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	16	1	6	17	18
Started course	1	25	1	4	2	13	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	6	6
Completed course	0	0	1	4	1	6	2	67	1	13	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	7	7
Got job	0	0	1	4	2	13	2	67	0	0	1	33	0	0	1	100	2	11	0	0	9	10
Completed planned number of sessions	2	50	14	61	7	44	1	33	4	50	2	67	0	0	0	0	7	37	8	50	45	48
Not enough time due to family commitments	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	13	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	3	19	6	6
Not enough time due to work commitments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	1	5	1	6	4	4
Lost contact	0	0	3	13	0	0	0	0	2	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	6	6
Health problems	0	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	1	13	1	33	1	100	0	0	2	11	5	31	12	13
Language skills too limited	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Moved away	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	1	25	2	9	3	19	0	0	2	25	1	33	0	0	1	100	9	47	7	44	26	28
Total	4	100	23	100	16	100	3	100	8	100	3	100	1	100	1	100	19	100	16	100	94	100

Table 0-10. **Service Users' Barriers For Achieving Their Objectives By Target Group, Iceland**

	Job-seeker/ Unemployed		Early School leaver		Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker		Detainee		Over 50		Employed (& low educated)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Too busy at work	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	14	3	5
Too busy taking care of family	0	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14	3	5
No suitable courses available	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Age	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Health problems	2	12	5	22	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	14	9	15
Lack of confidence	1	6	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Lack of support from family	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Other personal reasons	1	6	2	9	1	11	0	0	1	25	0	0	5	8
Other	3	18	5	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14	9	15
I dont want to answer	2	12	3	13	2	22	1	100	0	0	3	43	11	18
Client did not return	9	53	12	52	6	67	0	0	2	50	1	14	30	49
Total	17	100	23	100	9	100	1	100	4	100	7	100	61	100

Table 0-11. **Service Users' Barriers For Achieving Their Objectives By Gender, Iceland**

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Too busy at work	2	5	1	6	3	5
Too busy taking care of family	2	5	1	6	3	5
No suitable courses available	1	2	0	0	1	2
Age	0	0	1	6	1	2
Health problems	5	12	4	22	9	15
Lack of confidence	2	5	1	6	3	5
Lack of support from family	1	2	0	0	1	2
Other personal reasons	2	5	3	17	5	8
Other	7	16	2	11	9	15
I dont want to answer	7	16	4	22	11	18
Client did not return	21	49	9	50	30	49
Total	43	100	18	100	61	100

Table 0-12. **Service Users' Barriers for Achieving Their Objectives By Age, Iceland**

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Too busy at work	0	0	2	7	1	8	0	0	3	5
Too busy taking care of family	0	0	3	11	0	0	0	0	3	5
No suitable courses available	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	1	2
Age	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	1	2
Health problems	3	20	4	14	1	8	1	20	9	15
Lack of confidence	2	13	1	4	0	0	0	0	3	5
Lack of support from family	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	2
Other personal reasons	1	7	1	4	2	17	1	20	5	8
Other	1	7	5	18	2	17	1	20	9	15
I dont want to answer	2	13	6	21	1	8	1	20	10	17
Client did not return	9	60	12	43	7	58	2	40	30	50
Total	15	100	28	100	12	100	5	100	60	100

Table 0-13. **Service Users' Barriers for Achieving Their Objectives By Residence, Iceland**

	National/ citizen		EU national		Non-EU national with residence permit		Refugee		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Too busy at work	2	4	0	0	1	20	0	0	3	5
Too busy taking care of family	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
No suitable courses available	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Age	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Health problems	9	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	15
Lack of confidence	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Lack of support from family	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Other personal reasons	4	8	0	0	1	20	0	0	5	8
Other	8	16	1	25	0	0	0	0	9	15
I dont want to answer	9	18	1	25	1	20	0	0	11	18
Client did not return	25	49	2	50	2	40	1	100	30	49
Total	51	100	4	100	5	100	1	100	61	100

Table 0-14. **Service Users' Barriers For Achieving Their Objectives By Education Level, Iceland**

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary education (gymnasium)		Vocational education (upper secondary level)		Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Too busy at work	1	14	1	3	0	0	1	17	0	0	0	0	3	5
Too busy taking care of fam	0	0	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
No suitable courses availab	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	0	0	0	0	1	2
Age	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	2
Health problems	0	0	6	16	0	0	1	17	2	50	0	0	9	15
Lack of confidence	0	0	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Lack of support from family	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Other personal reasons	1	14	2	5	0	0	0	0	2	50	0	0	5	8
Other	1	14	6	16	1	20	0	0	1	25	0	0	9	15
I dont want to answer	1	14	9	24	0	0	1	17	0	0	0	0	11	18
Client did not return	3	43	18	47	4	80	2	33	2	50	1	100	30	49
Total	7	100	38	100	5	100	6	100	4	100	1	100	61	100

Table 0-15. **Service Users' Outcomes By Target Group, Iceland**

	Job-seeker/ Unemployed		Early School leaver		Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker		Detainee		Over 50		Employed (& low educated)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No progress	3	12	6	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	10	11
Improved confidence	9	35	16	44	9	50	0	0	2	40	1	13	37	39
Improved job-specific skills	3	12	3	8	3	17	1	100	0	0	0	0	10	11
Gained information about training/education opportunities	16	62	18	50	12	67	1	100	3	60	5	63	55	59
Gained information about employment opportunities	16	62	8	22	11	61	1	100	3	60	5	63	44	47
Entered education/training	7	27	3	8	3	17	0	0	2	40	3	38	18	19
Entered employment	4	15	3	8	2	11	1	100	1	20	1	13	12	13
Improved employment	5	19	2	6	2	11	1	100	3	60	0	0	13	14
Other	5	19	15	42	4	22	0	0	0	0	3	38	27	29
Client did not return	4	15	5	14	5	28	0	0	2	40	0	0	16	17
Total	26	100	36	100	18	100	1	100	5	100	8	100	94	100

Table 0-16. **Service Users' Outcomes By Gender, Iceland**

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No progress	7	11	3	10	10	11
Improved confidence	27	42	10	33	37	39
Improved job-specific skills	7	11	3	10	10	11
Gained information about training/education opportunities	37	58	18	60	55	59
Gained information about employment opportunities	32	50	12	40	44	47
Entered education/training	13	20	5	17	18	19
Entered employment	8	13	4	13	12	13
Improved employment	7	11	6	20	13	14
Other	17	27	10	33	27	29
Client did not return	11	17	5	17	16	17
Total	64	100	30	100	94	100

Table 0-17. **Service Users' Outcomes By Age, Iceland**

	19-25		26-35		36-55		56-65		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No progress	2	11	5	11	2	10	1	20	10	11
Improved confidence	5	26	21	45	9	43	1	20	36	39
Improved job-specific skills	0	0	6	13	2	10	0	0	8	9
Gained information about training/education opportunities	11	58	30	64	12	57	0	0	53	58
Gained information about employment opportunities	4	21	24	51	13	62	1	20	42	46
Entered education/training	4	21	9	19	4	19	0	0	17	18
Entered employment	0	0	7	15	4	19	0	0	11	12
Improved employment	2	11	5	11	4	19	0	0	11	12
Other	9	47	12	26	5	24	1	20	27	29
Client did not return	5	26	7	15	2	10	2	40	16	17
Total	19	100	47	100	21	100	5	100	92	100

Table 0-18. **Service Users' Outcomes By Education Level, Iceland**

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary education (gymnasium)		Vocational education (upper secondary level)		Post-secondary education, non-tertiary		Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No progress	2	20	7	13	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	11
Improved confidence	6	60	19	36	0	0	3	38	3	38	1	100	5	56	37	39
Improved job-specific skills	1	10	6	11	0	0	2	25	0	0	1	100	0	0	10	11
Gained information about training/education opportunities	6	60	30	57	1	20	4	50	5	63	1	100	8	89	55	59
Gained information about employment opportunities	3	30	24	45	1	20	5	63	3	38	1	100	7	78	44	47
Entered education/training	4	40	10	19	0	0	1	13	1	13	1	100	1	11	18	19
Entered employment	1	10	6	11	0	0	3	38	1	13	0	0	1	11	12	13
Improved employment	1	10	8	15	0	0	2	25	1	13	1	100	0	0	13	14
Other	1	10	19	36	1	20	2	25	1	13	0	0	3	33	27	29
Client did not return	1	10	7	13	3	60	2	25	2	25	0	0	1	11	16	17
Total	10	100	53	100	5	100	8	100	8	100	1	100	9	100	94	100

Table 0-19. **Service Users Learning Attitudes Exit AND Target Group By Service Users Learning Attitudes Entry, Iceland**

		No, not really		Yes, a bit		Yes, a lot		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	Yes, a bit	0	0	2	40	3	30	5	33
	Yes, a lot	0	0	3	60	7	70	10	67
	Total	0	0	5	100	10	100	15	100
Early School leaver	Yes, a bit	0	0	2	29	3	21	5	24
	Yes, a lot	0	0	5	71	11	79	16	76
	Total	0	0	7	100	14	100	21	100
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	Yes, a bit	0	0	1	33	1	11	2	17
	Yes, a lot	0	0	2	67	8	89	10	83
	Total	0	0	3	100	9	100	12	100
Detainee	Yes, a bit	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100
	Total	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100
Over 50	Yes, a bit	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	33
	Yes, a lot	0	0	0	0	2	100	2	67
	Total	1	100	0	0	2	100	3	100
Employed (& low educated)	Yes, a bit	0	0	3	43	0	0	3	43
	Yes, a lot	0	0	4	57	0	0	4	57
	Total	0	0	7	100	0	0	7	100
Total	Yes, a bit	1	100	9	39	7	20	17	29
	Yes, a lot	0	0	14	61	28	80	42	71
Total		1	100	23	100	35	100	59	100

Table 0-20. *Service Users Learning Attitudes Exit AND Gender By Service Users Learning Attitudes Entry, Iceland*

		No, not really		Yes, a bit		Yes, a lot		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	Yes, a bit	0	0	5	29	4	17	9	22
	Yes, a lot	0	0	12	71	20	83	32	78
	Total	0	0	17	100	24	100	41	100
Male	Yes, a bit	1	100	4	67	3	27	8	44
	Yes, a lot	0	0	2	33	8	73	10	56
	Total	1	100	6	100	11	100	18	100
Total	Yes, a bit	1	50	9	39	7	20	17	29
	Yes, a lot	0	0	14	61	28	80	42	71
Total		1	50	23	100	35	100	59	100

Table 0-21. **Service Users Learning Attitudes Exit AND Age By Service Users Learning Attitudes Entry, Iceland**

		No, not really		Yes, a bit		Yes, a lot		**Total**	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
19-25	Yes, a bit	0	0	1	20	2	50	3	33
	Yes, a lot	0	0	4	80	2	50	6	67
	Total	0	0	5	100	4	100	9	100
26-35	Yes, a bit	0	0	5	45	4	19	9	28
	Yes, a lot	0	0	6	55	17	81	23	72
	Total	0	0	11	100	21	100	32	100
36-55	Yes, a bit	1	100	1	25	1	11	3	21
	Yes, a lot	0	0	3	75	8	89	11	79
	Total	1	100	4	100	9	100	14	100
56-65	Yes, a lot	0	0	1	100	1	100	2	100
	Total	0	0	1	100	1	100	2	100
Total	Yes, a bit	1	100	7	33	7	20	15	26
	Yes, a lot	0	0	14	67	28	80	42	74
Total		1	100	21	100	35	100	57	100

Table 0-22. **Service Users Learning Objectives Exit By Service Users Learning Objectives Entry, Iceland**

	Yes, I want to achieve a qualification of any sort		Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification		Yes, I want to improve my skills in general		Yes, I want to improve my skills in a specific		Yes, I need this training for my current		Yes, I need this learning to find a job		I do not have any specific objectives		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes, I want to achieve a qualification of any sort	8	35	7	30	13	39	9	38	2	40	6	35	1	13	16	29
Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification	11	48	13	57	10	30	7	29	1	20	8	47	1	13	23	42
Yes, I want to improve my skills in general	15	65	11	48	23	70	14	58	3	60	10	59	4	50	32	58
Yes, I want to improve my skills in a specific area	14	61	13	57	15	45	12	50	4	80	11	65	1	13	26	47
Yes, I need this training for my current job	3	13	3	13	5	15	2	8	2	40	5	29	1	13	7	13
Yes, I need this learning to find a job	7	30	7	30	9	27	7	29	0	0	10	59	2	25	19	35
I do not have any specific objectives	1	4	0	0	5	15	1	4	1	20	1	6	4	50	7	13
Total	23	100	23	100	33	100	24	100	5	100	17	100	8	100	55	100

Table 0-23. **Service Users Career Goals Exit Point By Service Users Career Goals Entry Point, Iceland**

	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind		Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do		No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	2	17	4	17	7	18	13	18
Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	8	67	15	65	17	44	40	54
No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	2	17	4	17	15	38	21	28
Total	12	100	23	100	39	100	74	100

Table 0-24. **Service Users Career Goals Exit Point And Target Group By Service Users Career Goals Entry Point, Iceland**

		Yes, the client has a specific job in mind		Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do		No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Job-seeker/ Unemployed	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0	1	13	3	25	4	19
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	1	100	5	63	6	50	12	57
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	0	0	2	25	3	25	5	24
	Total	1	100	8	100	12	100	21	100
Early School leaver	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	1	14	0	0	3	18	4	14
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	4	57	2	50	4	24	10	36
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	2	29	2	50	10	59	14	50
	Total	7	100	4	100	17	100	28	100
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	1	50	1	13	0	0	2	15
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	1	50	7	88	3	100	11	85
	Total	2	100	8	100	3	100	13	100
Detainee	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
	Total	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
Over 50	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	1	100	1	100	1	100	3	100
	Total	1	100	1	100	1	100	3	100
Employed (& low educated)	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0	2	100	0	0	2	25
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	1	100	0	0	3	60	4	50
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	0	0	0	0	2	40	2	25
	Total	1	100	2	100	5	100	8	100
Total	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	2	17	4	17	7	18	13	18
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	8	67	15	65	17	44	40	54
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	2	17	4	17	15	38	21	28
	Total	12	100	23	100	39	100	74	100

Table 0-25. **Service Users Career Goals Exit Point And Gender By Service Users Career Goals Entry Point, Iceland**

		Yes, the client has a specific job in mind		Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do		No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	2	25	3	18	3	12	8	16
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of wo	4	50	11	65	16	62	31	61
	No, the client do not have any specific job or ca	2	25	3	18	7	27	12	24
	Total	8	100	17	100	26	100	51	100
Male	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0	1	17	4	31	5	22
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of wo	4	100	4	67	1	8	9	39
	No, the client do not have any specific job or ca	0	0	1	17	8	62	9	39
	Total	4	100	6	100	13	100	23	100
Total	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	2	17	4	17	7	18	13	18
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of wo	8	67	15	65	17	44	40	54
	No, the client do not have any specific job or ca	2	17	4	17	15	38	21	28
	Total	12	100	23	100	39	100	74	100

Table 0-26. **Service Users Career Goals Exit Point And Age By Service Users Career Goals Entry Point, Iceland**

		Yes, the client has a specific job in mind		Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do		No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
19-25	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0	1	20	3	50	4	31
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	2	100	2	40	1	17	5	38
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	0	0	2	40	2	33	4	31
	Total	2	100	5	100	6	100	13	100
26-35	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	2	29	2	20	1	5	5	14
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	3	43	7	70	12	60	22	59
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	2	29	1	10	7	35	10	27
	Total	7	100	10	100	20	100	37	100
36-55	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0	1	14	2	22	3	16
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	3	100	5	71	4	44	12	63
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	0	0	1	14	3	33	4	21
	Total	3	100	7	100	9	100	19	100
56-65	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	0	0	0	0	3	100	3	100
	Total	0	0	0	0	3	100	3	100
Total	Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	2	17	4	18	6	16	12	17
	Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	8	67	14	64	17	45	39	54
	No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind	2	17	4	18	15	39	21	29
	Total	12	100	22	100	38	100	72	100