

Connecting Career Counselling and Human Resource Development in
Enterprises for Higher Education and Training in Practice (CONNECT!)

IO2

NATIONAL REPORT

Italy

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National survey on the current practices, needs and requirements of
experts and professionals in the fields of CGC and HRM in Italy

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the Italian results of two surveys that involved workers in the fields of career support for adults. Each participant was interviewed individually via zoom. Interviews were realized from June to October 2020 and, overall, each lasted about one hour and half.

The surveys were aimed at gathering information on the current practices, needs and requirements of the project's main target groups:

- Experts and practitioners in the professional field of career guidance and counseling (CGC) services
- Experts and practitioners in the professional field of human resources management.

1.1. Target Groups

More specifically in the field of career guidance and counseling (CGC) services we included:

- career counselors with an Italian post graduate university master's degree in career counseling
- coaches, professionals with a master's degree and a specific post graduate training course in coaching.

In the fields of HRM:

- the professionals had a bachelor or a master's degree in social science or business and some also a post graduate master course in HRM.

2. CURRENT PRACTICES, NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF CGC PROFESSIONALS

2.1. Respondents

In total we conducted 14 interviews.

Overall, 10 interviews were collected from professionals who mainly work as coaches and sometimes as CGC. Three participants (30%) work mainly for social services or public institutions proposing initiatives for wellbeing in the workplace; 7 (70%) work for industries of different areas. As regards the number of employees, 5 work with individual clients arriving to them, 3 for companies with less than 49, 2 for companies having between 50-249 employees. Six participants declared that they work full time and 4 as part time, because they have other counseling activities.

Additionally, 4 interviews were collected from CGC. They work in services that offer CGC to diverse type of clients, from youth to migrants to workers. Three of them work as free lances sometimes with contract related to specific projects with services and one is working for a small NGO that offer services for youth. All of them declared to provide career counselling as part time job because they are involved in other occupations.

2.2. Involvement in the HRM life cycle

The analysis of the answers provided at the questions from 4 to 6 are summarized below.

Regarding the question 4, *How important do you consider your role in the following domains of the professional life cycle?* Table and Figure 1 clearly shows a general consensus emerges on the key role played by developing personal and social competences as well as managing changes and development of professional knowledge both for coaches and CGC. Also, integration of new employees seems to characterize the professional role played by most of participants, especially CGC. Recruitment is important especially for CGC; dismissal, and retirement are the less relevant issue especially for coaches.

Domains	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Recruitment	2 (20) 1 (25)	2 (20) 2 (50)	1(10)		5 (50) 1 (25)
Integration of (new) employees	1 (10) 3 (75)	6 (60)	3 (30)		1 (25)
Development of professional knowledge and skills	3 (30) 2 (50)	4 (40) 1 (25)	1 (10)		2 (20) 1 (25)
Development of personal and social competences	5 (50) 3 (75)	4 (40)	1(10)		1 (25)
Management of changes	6 (60) 2 (50)	4 (40) 1 (25)			1 (25)
Dismissal	2 (20) 2 (50)	1 (10) 1 (25)	4 (40)		3 (30) 1 (25)
Retirement	1 (10) 2 (50)	3 (30)	1 (10)	2 (20)	3 (30) 2 (50)

Table 1. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 4, *How important do you consider your role in the following domains of the professional life cycle?*

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

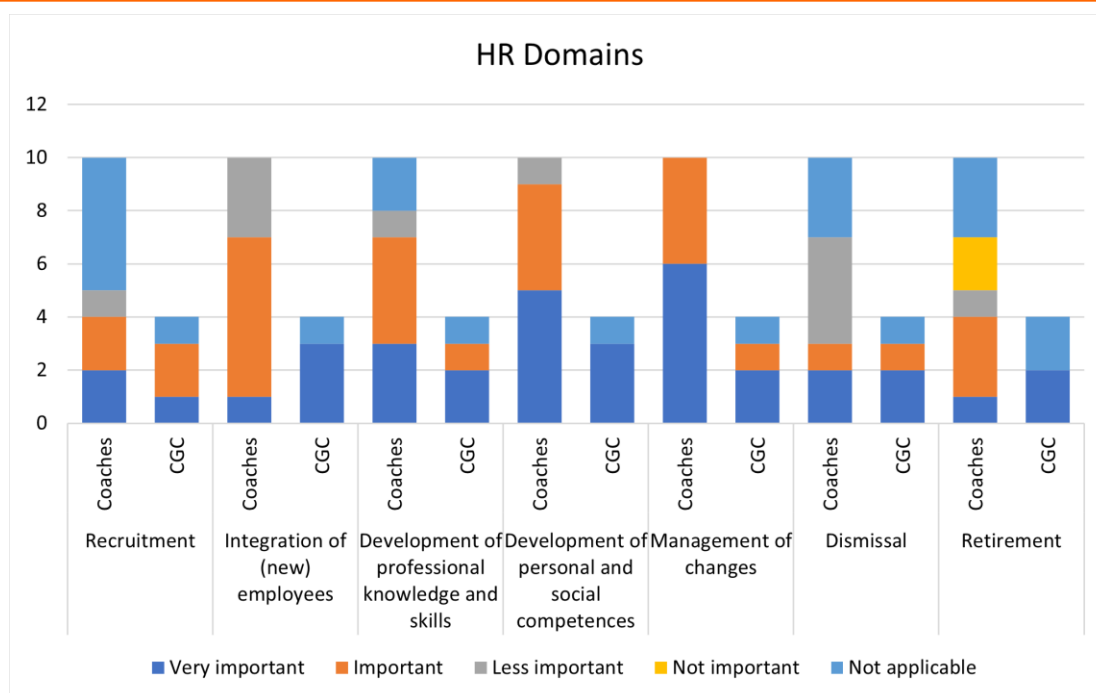


Figure 1. Roles of the career counsellors in the domains of the professional life cycle in enterprises.

Qualitative interviews highlighted the importance of a collaboration between HR and CGC not only for the work but also for the life outside the companies. Especially with people that have a history of migration or youth that move to another country for a period (i.e., mobility program), it emerges as crucial to prepare them to new realities and sometimes address interpersonal and relational issues that could also rise in the new situations. Additional information from the counselor who works with migrant and refugees highlights the need of help them developing knowledge about the new world of work and help employers to understand and tolerate that many of them could have had problems with justice.

As concerns question 5, *Does your enterprise have a formal onboarding process?* eight out of 10 (80%) declared the absence of this process. Two participants working medium enterprises reported active actions in this direction. Among CGC, only the counselor who works with migrants and refugees answered yes, because she must provide information and develop knowledge about the new world of work.

Activity	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable

	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Providing career information	1 (25)	1 (25)	5 (50)	3 (30)	2 (20) 2 (50)
Assessing career skills and competences	1 (25)	3 (30)	3 (30) 1 (25)	3 (30)	1 (10) 2 (50)
Counselling career decisions	1 (25)	3 (30) 1 (25)	3 (30)	1 (10)	3 (30) 2 (50)
Counselling and planning career promotion	2 (20)	2 (50)	5 (50)		3 (30) 2 (50)
Designing & managing programs for career development & training	1 (25)	3 (30)	4 (40) 1 (25)		3 (30) 2 (50)
Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment)	1 (10) 1 (25)	2 (20)	1 (10) 1 (25)	2 (20)	4 (40) 2 (50)
Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation	2 (20)	3 (30)	3 (30) 1 (25)	1 (25)	2 (20) 2 (50)

Table 2. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 6, *How often do you perform the following activities?*
Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

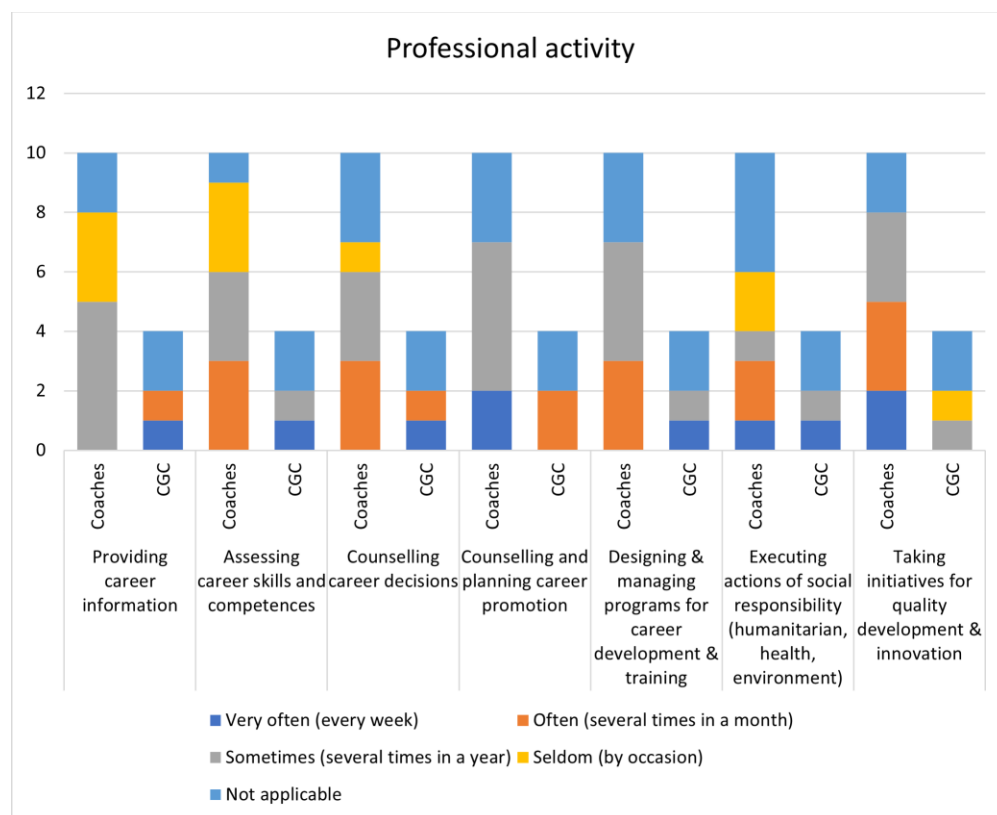


Figure 2. Responses on the frequency of performing professional activities.

As concerns question 6, Table and Figure 2 shows around 30% of professionals do not perform most of the activities. The most frequent action that professionals from both groups undertake is counselling career decisions.

Taking into consideration the frequency of the activities provided, data reported in Table and Figure 2 show that the actions that involve both coaches and CGC are scattered along the options provided.

Coaches provide a limited number of activities on a weekly basis [Counselling and planning career promotion, Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment) or Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation] and this is true for a limited number of coaches (10% or 20%).

About 30% of them several times in a month are involved in Assessing career skills and competences, Counselling career decisions, Counselling career decisions, Designing & managing programs for career development & training, Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation.

The time interval that better describes their activities is the year. Activities played in this time interval for 40 to 50% of coaches consist in Providing career information, Counselling and planning career promotion, Designing & managing programs for career development & training.

It is worth mentioning that 40% of participants reported they are never involved in actions dealing with executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment).

As regard CGC half of them are engaged weekly or monthly in Providing career information, counseling career decisions, counselling and planning promotion. Less frequent activities involve assessing career skills and competences, Designing & managing programs for career development & training, Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment), Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation.

Table and Figure 2 also show that Providing career information and Counselling career decisions are performed mainly by CGC than coaches. On the contrary taking initiatives for quality development and innovation is performed mainly by coaches. This could suggest some differences in the functions and tasks performed by the two groups.

Some CGC comments refer to the need of giving voice to people, emphasizing the role of narratives as well as involving people in groups to learn new skills related to planning and job searching (i.e., how to do a cv, a job interview etc.). Very funny, in thinking about social responsibility, one of the CGC explains that he uses social network and that as comedian he plays a show where psychology and personal development are the main theme!

2.3. The role of CGC in enterprises

The analysis of the answers provided at the questions from 7 to 10 are summarized below.

For question 7, in general data show that all the reasons for providing career counseling are valued positively from both coaches and CGC. Finding Individualized solutions, achieving consensual decisions and Achieving higher learning effects emerged as the most important activities for both groups. Although to a lesser degree, especially for coaches, increasing sustainability of learning and rising the credibility of the counseling, Arising the commitment to the enterprise are also relevant. Interesting to note that provide independent counseling is more relevant for coaches than for CGC.

Reasons	Very	Important	Less	Not	Not
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	important		important	important	applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Finding Individualized solutions	8 (80) 3 (75)	2 (20)			1 (25)
Achieving consensual decisions	6 (60) 2 (50)	2 (20)	2 (20) 1 (25)		1 (25)
Achieving higher learning effects	6 (60) 2 (50)	4 (40) 1 (25)			1 (25)
Increasing sustainability of learning	4 (40) 3 (75)	4 (40)	2 (20)		1 (25)
Provide independent counselling (without suspicion of company's interests)	5 (50) 2 (50)	3 (30)	2 (20)	1(25)	1(25)
Rising the credibility of the counselling because of the professionalism of the counsellor	5 (50) 1 (25)	2 (20) 2 (50)	3 (30)		1 (25)
Arising the commitment to the enterprise	5 (50) 1 (25)	2 (20) 2 (50)	3 (30)		1 (25)

Table 3. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 7, *Below there is a list of reasons for providing career counselling. How important is each of them?*

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line

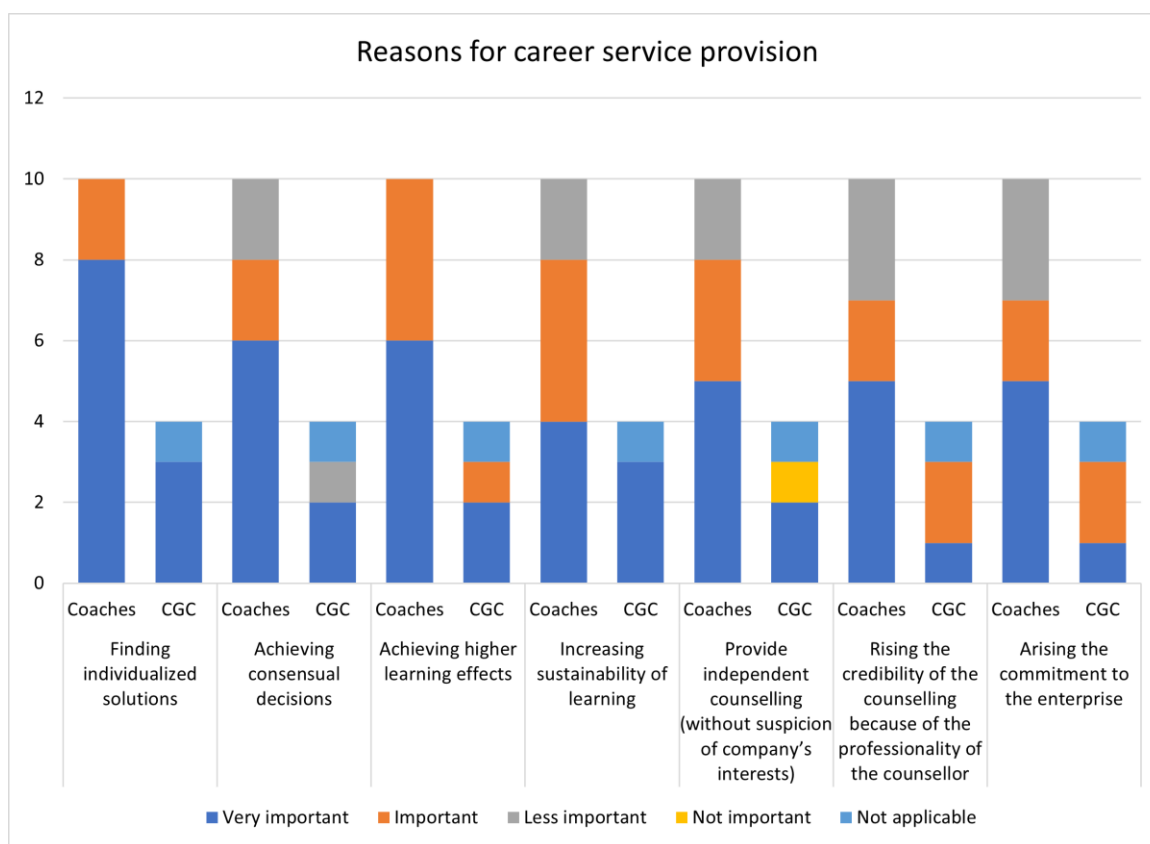


Figure 3. Perception of importance of the reasons for providing career services.

Coaches' comments to this question referred mainly to underline the need to demonstrate the professionalism of their actions in the Italian context. For CGC, counseling is a way to improve the quality of life inside and outside the organization, improve welfare and prestige, and the productivity. Many problems exist especially in the SMEs where family dynamics negatively impact the enterprise for which a career counselor should also have a clinical training.

As concerns question 8, related to frequency of career counselling provided, Table and Figure 4 shows that about 30-50% of practitioners do not provide career counseling to the people in the list. This seems to suggest that these professionals work with target group of clients.

Coaches provide career counseling more frequently to people who is entering in the organization Apprentices/trainees, New employees but also to future managers and employees returning from parental leave. Vulnerability, here represented by people with disability and history of migration, aged workers are less frequently involved in career counseling.

As concerns CGC our professionals selected migrants, future managers, elder employees, and people returning from parents' leave. These data are consistent with the services they are working with. Analyses of qualitative answers clarify that they mainly work with youth or people who is not yet entered into the world of work, and this is not in the options of the list.

Groups of employees	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Apprentices/trainees	5 (50)	2 (20)	2 (20)	2 (50)	1 (10) 2(50)
New employees	5 (50)	2 (20)	2 (20) 1 (25)		1 (10) 3 (75)
Migrants	2 (20) 1 (25)	2 (20)		1 (25)	6 (60) 2 (50)
Persons with disabilities	2 (20)	2 (20)	1 (25)	1 (25)	6 (60) 2 (50)
Highly talented persons	2 (20)	1 (25)	6 (60)	1 (25)	2 (20) 2 (50)
Future managers		4 (40) 1 (25)	4 (40)	2 (20) 1 (25)	2 (50)
Employees returning from parents' leave	4 (40)	2 (20)	1 (10) 1 (25)	1 (25)	3 (30) 2 (50)
Elder employees (50+)	2 (20) 1 (25)	4 (40) 1 (25)	2 (20) 1 (25)	2 (20)	1 (25)
Employees threatened by dismissal	2 (20)	2 (20)	2 (20)	2 (50)	4 (40) 2 (50)
Employees preparing for retirement	1 (10)	2 (20) 1 (25)	2 (20) 1 (25)	1 (25)	5 (50) 1 (25)

Table 4. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 8, *How often do you provide career counselling to the following groups in your enterprise?*

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line

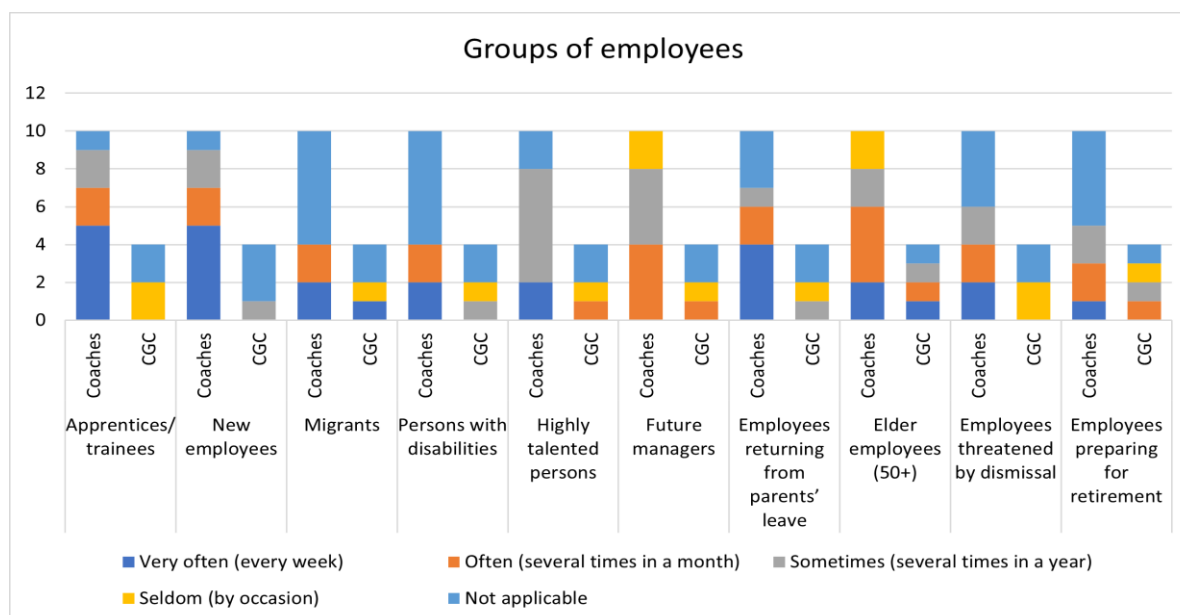


Figure 4. Provision of career services to different client groups in the enterprise.

Going to question 9, concerning counselling issues, Table and Figure 5 shows that coaches interviewed mainly provide career counseling for Learning and performance problems, Team and personal problems with a frequency ranging from every weekly to several times in a month for 70% of them.

CGC are involved in offering more frequently Further education & training, and less frequently career planning and learning and performance problems. Team problems and personal problems sometimes appear to be part of the counseling sometimes not. This seems related to the specific target group of clients.

Counselling issues	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Further education & training	1 (10) 2 (50)	2 (20) 1 (25)	4 (40)	3 (30)	1 (25)
Career planning	1 (10)	2 (20) 1 (25)	4 (40) 1 (25)	3 (30) 1 (25)	1 (25)
Learning & performance problems	3 (30)	4 (40) 1 (25)	2 (20) 2 (50)		1 (10) 1 (25)
Team problems	3 (30) 1 (25)	4 (40)	2 (20) 1 (25)	1 (10)	2 (50)
Personal problems	3 (30)	4 (40)	2 (20)	1 (10)	

	1 (25)		1 (25)	1 (25)	1 (25)
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Table 5. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 9, *Below, important issues of career counselling are listed. Please indicate, how many times you deal with each of them in your work.*

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

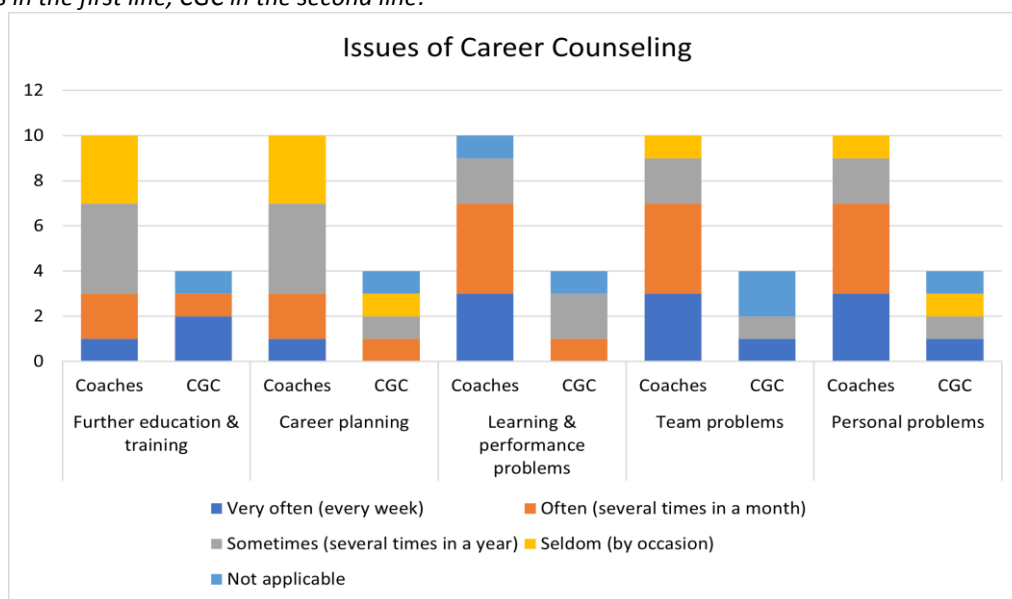


Figure 5. Issues of Career Counseling.

Comments of CGC highlight that the problem is in the resistance to change of the companies to much focused on productivity than on people careers.

As concerns types and modalities of career counseling, data in Table and Figure 6 show that most of professionals provide it both inside and outside the workplace. Data show a specificity of working as counselor or coaches who work more at workplace. Individual modality is preferred to the group one. A counselor that performs alone is preferred to working together with enterprise people. Interesting to note that some counselors do not provide career counseling at the workplace.

Modalities of counselling	Yes	No
	F (%)	F (%)
At the workplace	10 (100) 2 (50)	2 (50)
Off the workplace	8 (80) 3 (75)	2 (20) 1 (25)
One to one	10 (100) 4 (100)	
In groups	8 (80) 3 (75)	2 (20) 1 (25)
Self-reliant, without enterprise persons	10 (100) 4 (100)	
Together with enterprise persons	5 (50) 1 (25)	5 (50) 3 (75)

Table 6. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 10, *Please select the type and modalities of career counselling which are provided in your enterprise.*

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

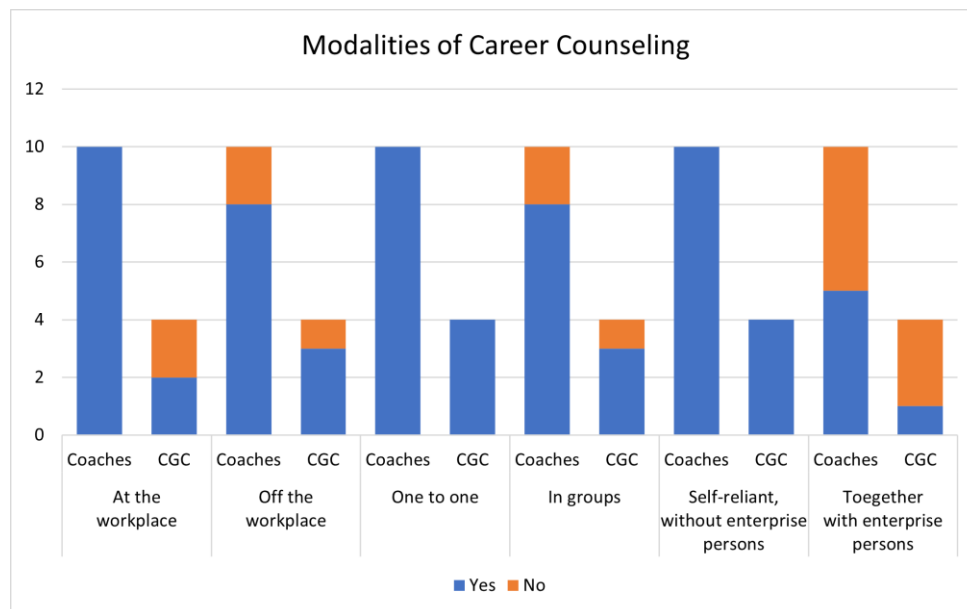


Figure 6. Modalities of career counselling provided to enterprises.

Comments of CGC highlight the need of a very high personalized way of conducting counseling and related activities. Moreover, they consider crucial to work with employers to inform them about the many legal and economic benefits that hiring people with vulnerabilities (migration, with disability etc.) can have for them.

2.4. Developing knowledge, skills and competences of the career worker

From the analysis of question 11, related to modalities used to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences to fulfil all their roles, a general agreement emerges in valuing continuing education, short training, and seminars. Important is also the advice from internal or external experts. Here the coaching perspective for whom most of the education is post-academic, shows its specificity.

Compared to coaches for CGC their academic studies and personal self-training appear higher in relevance.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
I still rely on my former (academic) studies	2 (50)	2(20) 2 (50)	6 (60)	2(20)	
Self-study (internet, MOOCs, books etc.)	5 (50) 3 (75)	1 (25)	2(20)	2(20)	1 (10)
Enrollment in continuing education (face to face and blended learning)	6 (60) 3 (75)	2(20)		2(20)	1 (25)
Attending short training courses/workshops/conferences	6 (60) 3 (75)	2 (20) 1 (25)		2(20)	
Advice from internal peers and experts	2 (20) 3 (75)	6 (60)	1 (25)	2 (20)	
Advice from external peers and experts	1 (10) 3 (75)	6 (60)	2(20) 1 (25)	1 (10)	

Table 7. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 11, *How important are the following sources for you to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences to fulfill all your roles?*

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

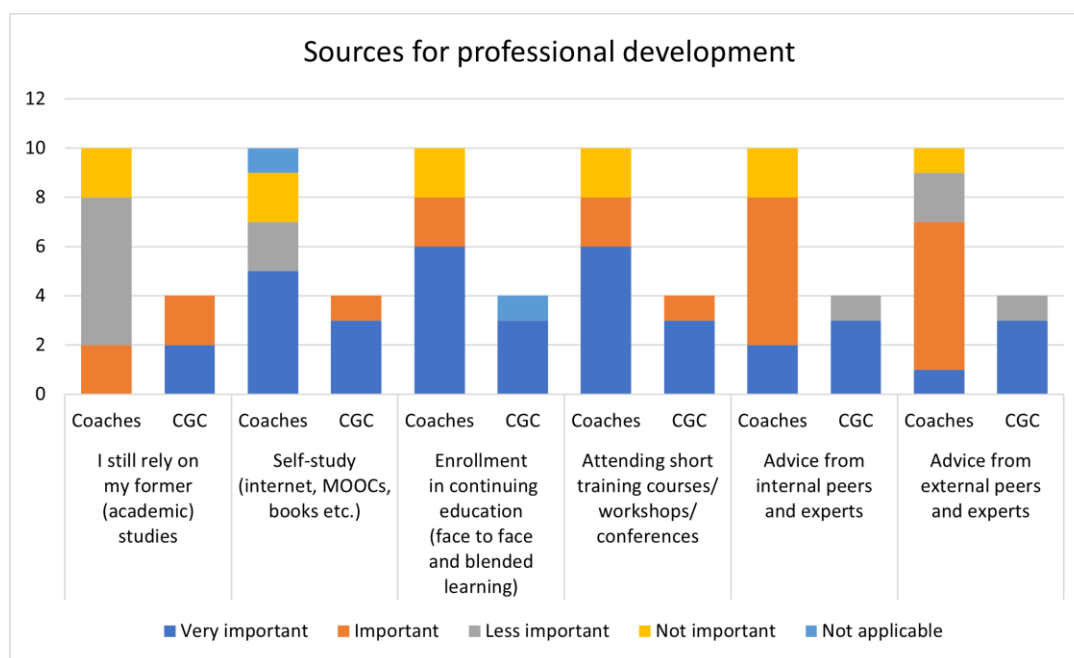


Figure 7. Sources for knowledge, skills and competences development.

Comments from participants referred they had to attend courses to develop knowledge about the work contexts and competence on mentoring.

2.5. Interactions/networking and co-operations between the actors of CGC and HRM

The analysis of the answers provided at the questions from 12 to 14 explores the interactions/networking and co-operations already exist between the actors of HRM and Career Guidance and Counselling as well as expected benefits. Data show that 50% of our coaches and CGC do not interact frequently, although more than 55% of them cooperates with stakeholders.

	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Interaction	2 (20)	2 (50)	3 (30)	4 (40) 1 (25)	1 (10.0) 1 (25)
Cooperation	2 (20)	4 (40) 2 (50)		3 (30) 1 (25)	1 (10.0) 1 (25)

Table 8. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 12 and 13, How often do you interact with and cooperate with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC)?

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

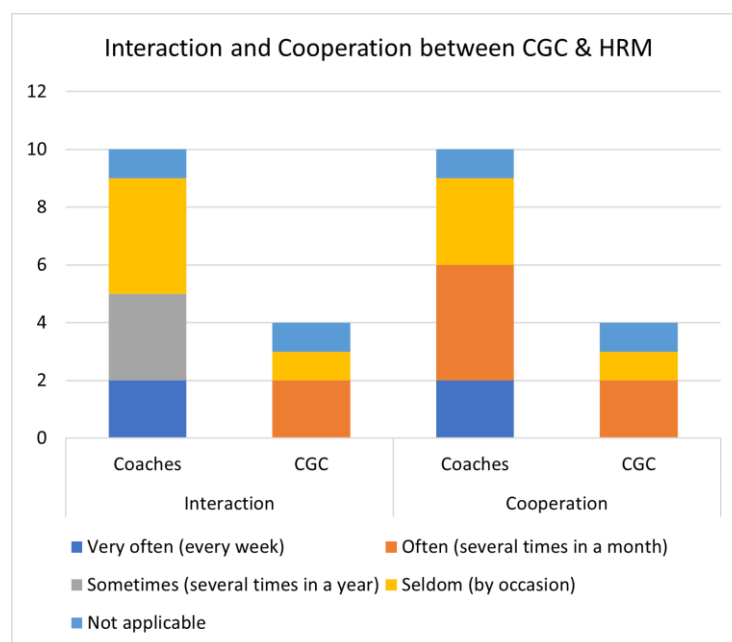


Figure 8. Frequency of interaction and cooperation with HRM professionals.

As concerns the benefits that they expect (question 14), it emerges that Learn about best practices and Attending joint seminars/workshops/trainings are the most important benefit they might expect. Also, further information, Exchange of experience, and Learning from each other are valued important. Slightly less important is considered Cooperation for special purpose.

To note that half of our CGC did not find these options applicable to their experiences except that for cooperation for special purpose.

Benefits	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Further information	5(50) 2 (50)	5(50)			2 (50)
Exchange of experience	5(50) 2 (50)	5(50)			2 (50)
Learn about best practice examples	7 (70) 1 (25)	3(30) 1 (25)			2 (50)
Cooperation for special purpose	2 (20) 2 (50)	8 (80) 1 (25)			1 (25)
Learning from each other	6 (60) 2 (50)	4 (40)			2 (50)
Attending joint seminars/workshops/trainings	6 (60) 1 (25)	3 (30)	1 (10) 1 (25)		2 (50)

Table 9. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 14, Below there is a list of benefits you might expect from working together with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling (CGC).

Note. Coaches in the first line, CGC in the second line.

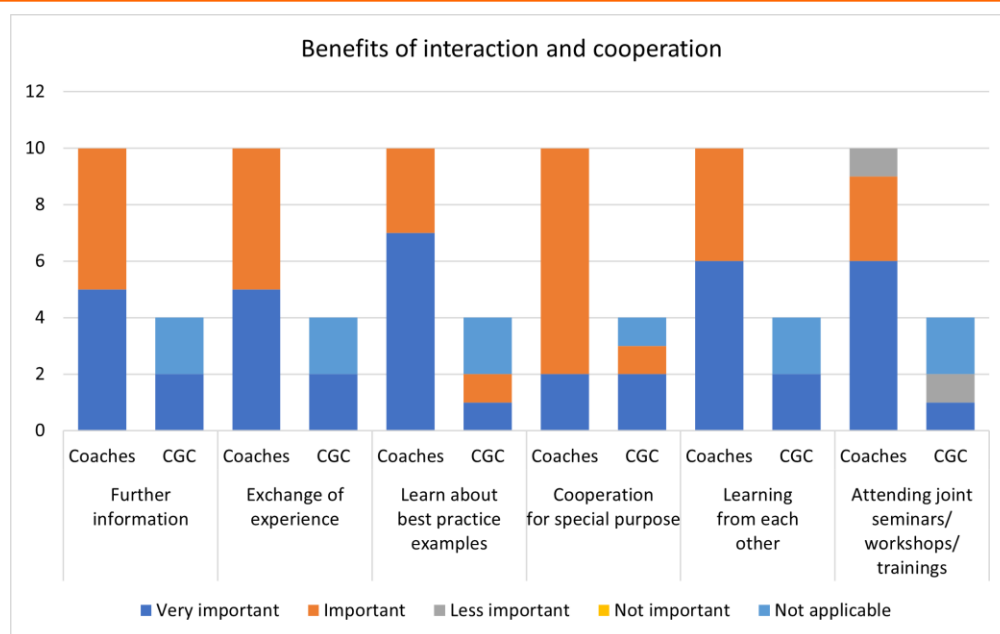


Figure 9. Ratings of benefits from cooperation with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling.

Comments from some participants also underlined that given current situation they will interact or cooperate more than in the past. One reason is that they have money and can founding projects and initiatives. A second reason is that they have a network and can mediate with many stakeholders for promoting career counseling.

2.6. Challenging issues (qualitative analysis open questions 15, 16 and 17)

Answers to question 15 underlined the most challenging issues and problems that coaches and CGC are called upon to face:

- The need to develop a general knowledge of their activity and that many workers could benefit from a path that starts from self-knowledge, self-reflection. In general people is not aware of the relevance of Counseling and coaching for their quality of life and there is low investment in services that promote occupability even if they already have a work so that they do not loose opportunities to improve their life
- A limited culture on coaching and counseling and therefore a limited understanding of the value they add to the company, to the level of efficiency and motivation, especially for managerial figures
- A missing link between the culture of personal growth and the professional growth: behind every professional there is a human being with problems, emotions, desires, expectations, and values
- The need for coaches to change the way of approaching entrepreneurs and companies because they could be open to the coaching service, they want to offer.
- The need to develop the ability to manage change and all its implications are themes to address given the crisis in the world of work, the challenges of the coming years

- The pandemic has also brought digital and communication skills to the fore in the absence of physical skills as well as relevance of the ability to manage change
- Need to work with managers and HR who are too much focused on business and not on the people and are resistant to adopt visions that put the people at the center, to invest on them to have a competitive benefit in the future.

As regards what they believe as particularly useful in addressing these challenges and problems (questions 16), participants provide some insights:

- Presentation of projects already carried out in the company and in the world of education on digital and other issues, websites and multimedia supports to transfer information on which to build career paths and career development
- Presentation of projects already made in companies and in the world of education on digital and other issues; websites and multimedia support to transfer information on which to build career paths and career development
- Become aware of the reality we are experiencing; being prepared about the company and the contacts you meet; develop coaches' values by personally experiencing his own change to grasp the client's problems
- Change the training for HR and managers to infuse them with knowledge and competences that are people centred and not only on economic profit
- Increase presence of the university and the research into the organization for making these last more flexible and ready for the future.

They also mention:

- The relevance of companies, continuous training in contracts, examples of SME management
- The need to work on the generational relay, introduce and support learning tutors
- The importance of knowing regional policies and working for reskilling and upskilling using compulsory training such as for metalworkers as a vehicle
- Clarify the role of the various professionals
- The relevance of getting to know the world of companies and HR well.

COVID-19 for half of CGC is seen as an opportunity to use certain tools at the best, open borders and give voice to needs. A greater involvement of employees, the desire to contribute to the recovery has already made the difference in facing COVID-19 crisis.

3. CURRENT PRACTICES, NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF HRM PROFESSIONALS

3.1. Respondents

Overall, answers from 15 participants were collected:

- 5 (33.3%) belong to the third sector and include social cooperatives and non-profit organizations that offer services to people and the community associated with, for example, the development of knowledge and skills, the job placement of people with and without vulnerabilities, the well-being of people and the community where they operate
- 6 (40%) are productive industries that belong to the engineering sector
- 3 (20%) they are productive industries that belong to the fashion sector
- 1(6.7%) belong to the security sector.

Regarding the number of employees, 3 have less than 49 employees, 3 between 50 and 249, 1 between 250 and 500, 8 have more than 500 employees. The social type companies are the least numerous.

The survey was completed by 3 HR director, 2 HRBP, 6 HR specialists, 3 HR development coordinator, 1 executive director.

Twelve declared that they work full time in the HRM field and 3 part time, because they play other roles in the company.

3.2. Involvement in the professional life cycle

As concerns the question 4, *How important do you consider your role in the following domains of the professional life cycle?* Table and Figure 10 clearly shows a general consensus emerges related to the key role played by developing personal and social competences as well as managing changes for the HRM. Also, recruitment, integration of new employees and development of professional knowledge and skills characterize the professional roleplayed by most of participants. Dismissal and retirement are the less relevant issue for the HRM role.

Domains	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
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	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Recruitment	7 (46.7)	5 (33.3)	3 (20)		
Integration of (new) employees)	9 (60)	5 (33.3)	1 (6.7)		
Development of professional knowledge and skills	7 (46.7)	6 (40)	1 (6.7)		1 (6.7)
Development of personal and social competences	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)			
Management of changes	9 (60)	6 (40)			
Dismissal	3 (20)	3 (20)	3 (20)	3 (20)	3 (20)
Retirement	2 (13.3)	3 (20)	2 (13.3)	3 (20)	5 (33.3)

Table 10. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 4, *How important do you consider your role in the following domains of the professional life cycle?*

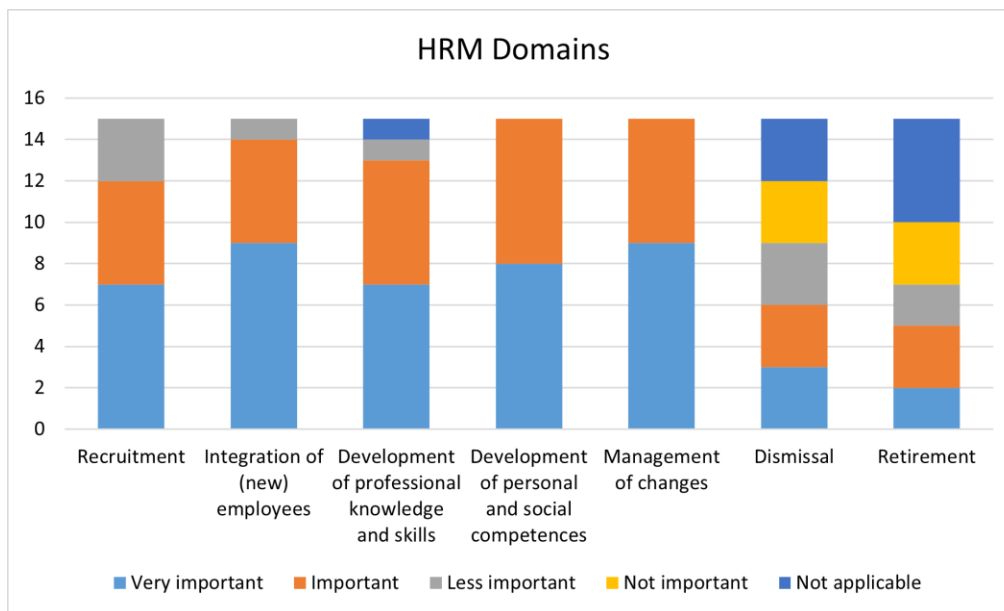


Figure 10. HRM Domains and their importance for the professional life cycle.

As concerns question 5, *Does your enterprise have a formal onboarding process?* almost all (14, 93.3%) declare that there is a formal onboarding process in the company. Only one participant of a small social enterprise asserts they are only now working for including it in their procedural schema.

Taking into consideration how often the activities are provided (question 6, *How often do you perform the following activities?*), data reported in Table and Figure 11 show that the most frequent actions that involve HR weekly is Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation that is reported by almost 50% of participants. Also Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment) and Providing career information, are reported to be played weekly by almost 27% of participants.

Regarding the activities played several times in one month, about 40% of respondents declare they Assess career skills and competences and Design & manage programs for career development & training. Less

frequent, but in any case, reported by one third of participants, are Providing career information, Counselling career decisions, and Counselling and planning career promotion.

The most frequent actions played several times during the year are Counselling career decisions, Counselling, and planning career promotion, executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment) reported by 46.7% of respondents.

Overall, the activities that more than 50% of participants declare to be played less in the year or not played are Counselling career decisions, Counselling and planning career promotion, Designing & managing programs for career development & training and Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment).

Activity	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Providing career information	4 (26.7)	5 (33.3)	4 (26.7)	1 (6.7)	1 (6.7)
Assessing career skills and competences	2 (13.3)	6 (40)	5 (33.3)	1 (6.7)	1 (6.7)
Counselling career decisions		5 (33.3)	7 (46.7)	1 (6.7)	2 (13.3)
Counselling and planning career promotion		5 (33.3)	7 (46.7)		3 (20)
Designing & managing programs for career development & training	1 (6.7)	6 (40)	4 (26.7)		4 (26.7)
Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment)	4 (26.7)	3 (20)	7 (46.7)		1 (6.7)
Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation	7 (46.7)	1 (6.7)	6 (40)		1 (6.7)

Table 11. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 6, *How often do you perform the following activities?*

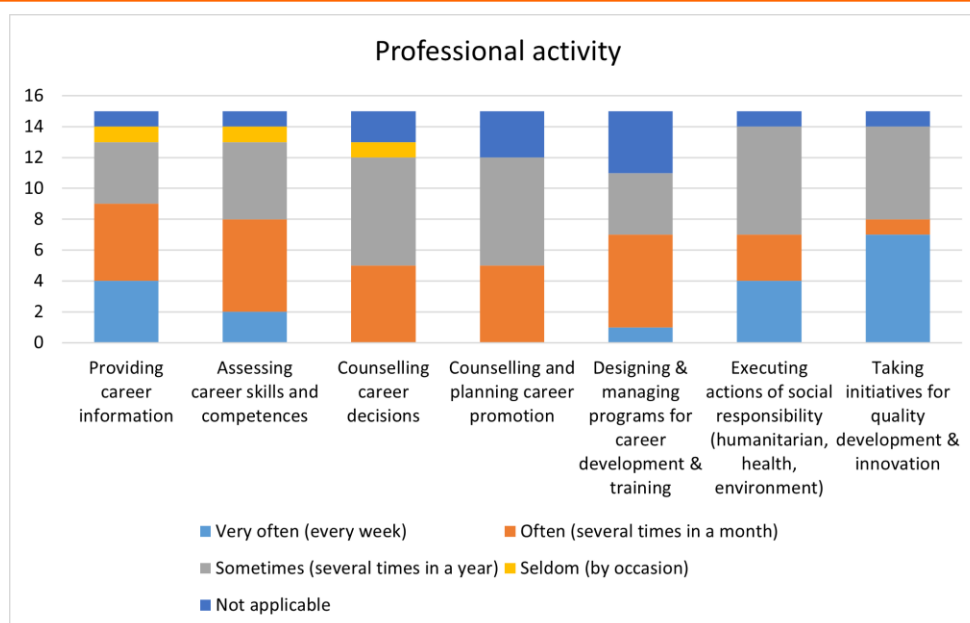


Figure 11. Frequency of professional activity.

3.3. The role of CGC in enterprises

Answers provided to question 7 shows career counseling is considered positively for all the organizations. Only for one organization it is considered not applicable because they do not provide career counseling. Finding Individualized solutions and Achieving higher learning effects emerged as the most important activities. The other activities, namely Achieving consensual decisions, Increasing sustainability of learning, Arising the commitment to the enterprise are considered important.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)			F (%)
Finding Individualized solutions	8 (53.3)	6 (40.0)			1 (6.7)
Achieving consensual decisions	6 (40.0)	8 (53.3)			1 (6.7)
Achieving higher learning effects	8 (53.3)	6 (40.0)			1 (6.7)
Increasing sustainability of learning	6 (40.0)	8 (53.3)			1 (6.7)
Arising the commitment to the enterprise	6 (40.0)	8 (53.3)			1 (6.7)

Table 12. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 7, Below there is a list of reasons for providing career counselling. How important is each of them in your enterprise?

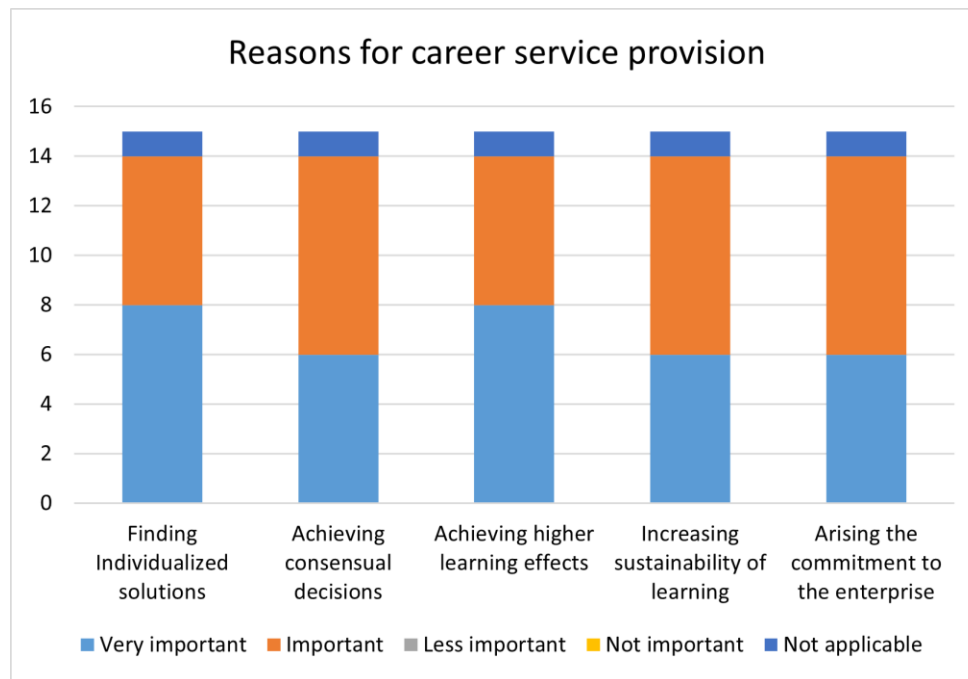


Figure 12. Perception of importance of the reasons for providing career services.

Qualitatively participants' comments highlight that:

- It is crucial to pay attention to individuals and their needs or wishes allowing them to leave the work for attending training courses is considered a resource for the people who is better prepared and more satisfied as well as for the organization, the person is in fact a positive model for colleagues and could also transfer relevant knowledge and skills to colleagues.
- Having clear that the organizations consider important training courses and well as some guidelines to be followed for deciding together what are the most important courses to be followed (for example a couple of meeting in a year) is crucial for developing positive shared visions
- Investment could include financial support as well as time management. Having people that take care of their education is valued as a way for bringing in new skills and ideas and improving the organization.
- Measuring the benefit of training program is very difficult for some organization
- Some organizations have an internal platform for sharing info and online training program: accessibility is an important issue
- Share the goals of the organizations, be engaged for a common goal, valuing the acquisition of new skills are considered important for making people loyal to organization.

As concerns question 8, *How often do you provide career counselling to the following groups in your enterprise?* Table and Figure 13 clearly shows career counseling is provided more frequently to people who is entering in the organization Apprentices/trainees, New employees or are progressing in their career as highly talented

person or future managers. Vulnerability here represented by people with disability and history of migration as well as aged workers and people returning to work are in general very low considered eligible for career counseling into organization. Moreover, organizations show they do not invest in career counseling for people who is approaching to leave the world of work, as employees threatened by dismissal or preparing for retirement.

Groups of employees	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Apprentices/trainees	1 (6.7)	4 (26.7)	5 (33.3)		5 (33.3)
New employees		4 (26.7)	5 (33.3)		6 (40.0)
Migrants			3 (20.0)		12 (80.0)
Persons with disabilities			5 (33.3)		10 (66.7)
Highly talented persons		7 (46.6)	4 (26.6)		4 (26.6)
Future managers		8 (53.5)	3 (20.0)		4 (26.6)
Employees returning from parents' leave		3 (20.0)			12 (80.0)
Elder employees (50+)			4 (26.6)		11 (73.4)
Employees threatened by dismissal			3 (20.0)		12 (80.0)
Employees preparing for retirement			1 (6.7)		14 (93.3)

Table 13. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 8, *How often do you provide career counselling to the following groups in your enterprise?*

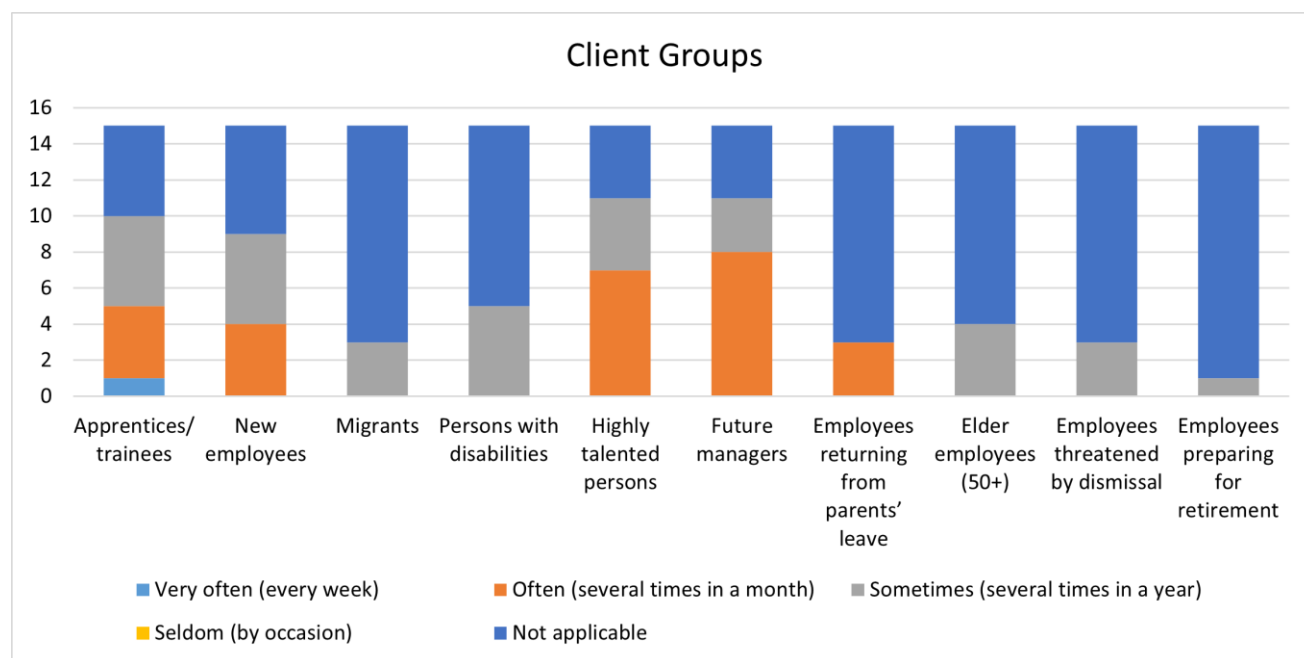


Figure 13. The provision of career services to different target groups in the enterprise.

Table and Figure 14 shows career counseling is provided mainly for further education & training issue, 60% in fact selected to provide it weekly. It is followed by career planning and learning performance, which are provided several times in a month by 40% and 46.7% respectively. Team and personal problems are mainly addressed sometimes in a year, 40% and 53.3% respectively.

Counselling issues	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Further education & training	9 (60.0)	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)		
Career planning	4 (26.7)	6 (40.0)	3 (20.0)	1 (6.7)	1 (6.7)
Learning & performance problems	5 (33.3)	7 (46.7)	2 (13.3)	1 (6.7)	
Team problems	4 (26.7)	5 (33.3)	6 (40.0)		
Personal problems	3 (20.0)	4 (26.7)	8 (53.3)		

Table 14. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 9, *Below, important issues of career counselling are listed. Please indicate, how many times you deal with each of them in your work.*

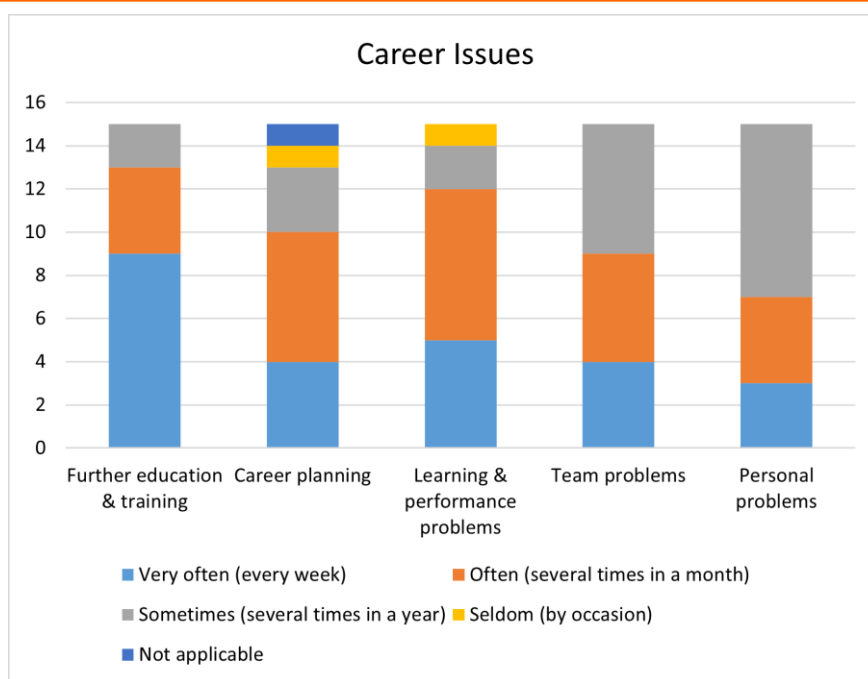


Figure 14. Issues of career counseling.

Types and modalities of career counseling data reported in Table and Figure 15 show that it is provided both inside (66.7%) and outside the workplace (53.3%). One-to-one modality is preferred than group modality (86.7% vs 46.7%) showing, however, that is however provided almost by 50 % of organizations. External counselors or coaches are preferred to internal ones (80% vs 53.3%).

Modalities of counselling	Yes	No
	F (%)	F (%)
At the workplace	10 (66.7)	5 (33.3)
Off the workplace	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)
One to one	13 (86.7)	2 (13.3)
In groups	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)
With internal counsellors/coaches	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)
With external counsellors/coaches	12 (80.0)	3 (20.0)

Table 15. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 10, Please select the type and modalities of career counselling which are provided in your enterprise.

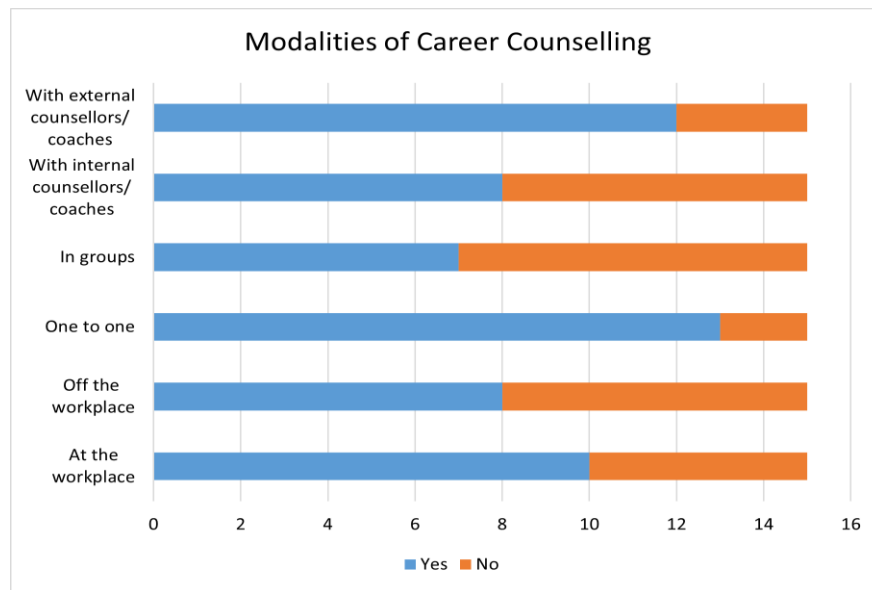


Figure 15. Modalities of career counselling provided to enterprises.

3.4. Developing knowledge, skills and competences of the career worker

The analysis of question 11, *How do HRM practitioners gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences to fulfil all their roles, counselling included?* shows a general agreement in valuing studying, especially continuing education, former studies, short training, and seminars (Table and Figure 16). Important, even if slightly less is self-study, and the advice from internal of external experts.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
I still rely on my former (academic) studies	8 (53.3)	5 (33.3)	1 (6.7)		1 (6.7)
Self-study (internet, MOOCs, books etc.)	5 (33.3)	8 (53.3)	1 (6.7)		1 (6.7)
Enrollment in continuing education (face to face and blended learning)	10 (66.7)	4 (26.7)			1 (6.7)
Attending short training courses/workshops/conferences	8 (53.3)	5 (33.3)	1 (6.7)		1 (6.7)
Advice from internal peers and experts	4 (26.7)	7 (46.7)	1 (6.7)		3 (20.0)
Advice from external peers and experts	3 (20.0)	9 (60.0)	2 (13.3)		1 (6.7)

Table 16. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 11, *How important are the following sources for you to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences to fulfill all your roles?*

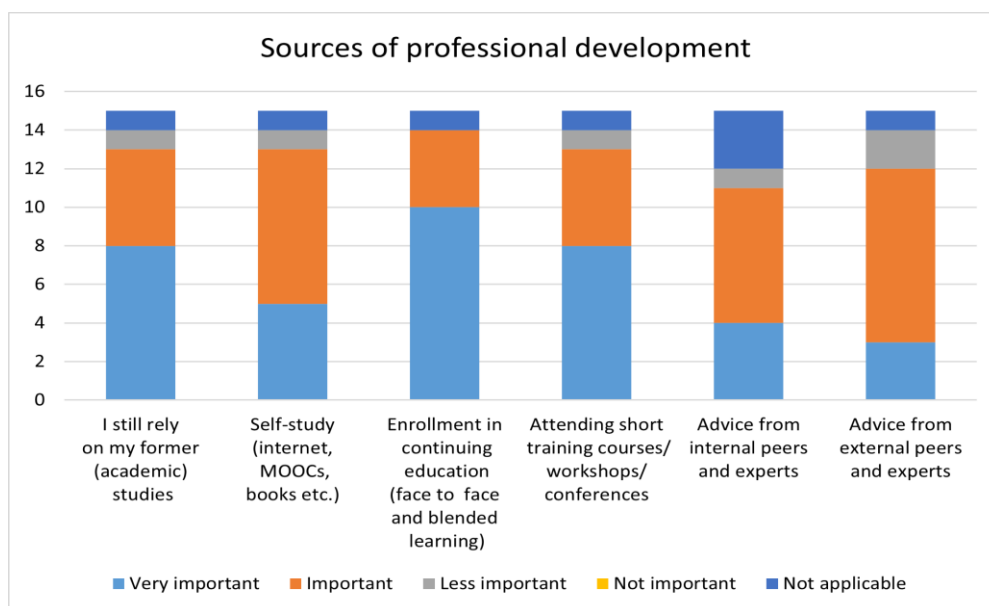


Figure 16. Sources for knowledge, skills and competences development.

3.5. Interactions/networking and co-operations between the actors of CGC and HRM

The analysis of the answers provided at the questions from 12 to 14 are summarized below. These explore interactions/networking and co-operations already exist between the actors of HRM and Career Guidance and Counselling as well as expected benefits.

In Table and Figure 17 there are reported answers to questions 12, *How often do you interact with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC)?* and 13 *How often do you actively cooperate (concerning special tasks, development projects, challenging problems) with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling (CGC)?*

Data show 50% of HRM interact several times in a year with and another 50 % of them cooperate with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC). It also emerges that cooperation is not considered an option by 40% of HRM.

	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Interaction	1 (6.7)	3 (20.0)	8 (53.3)	1 (6.7)	2 (13.3)
Cooperation		4 (26.7)	5 (33.3)		6 (40.0)

Table 17. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 12 and 13, *How often do you interact with and cooperate with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC)?*

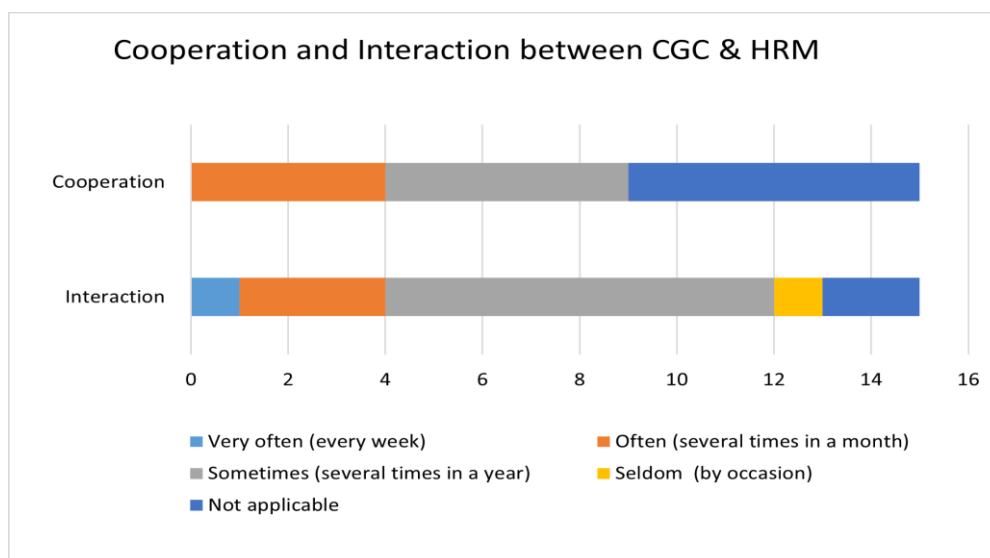


Figure 17. Frequency of interaction and cooperation between CGC and HRM professionals.

From question 14, that explores the benefits HRMs expect from working together with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of CGC (Table and Figure 18), it emerges that Learn about best practices is the most important benefit. Also, Exchange of experience, Cooperation for special purpose and Learning from each other are valued important. Slightly less important is Further information. Attending joint seminars/workshops/trainings is not considered as an option.

Benefits	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Further information	6 (40.0)	5 (33.3)	4 (26.7)		
Exchange of experience	8 (53.3)	5 (33.3)	2 (13.3)		
Learn about best practice examples	10 (66.7)	2 (13.3)	3 (20.0)		
Cooperation for special purpose	7 (46.7)	6 (40.0)	2 (13.3)		
Learning from each other	3 (20.0)	10 (66.7)	2 (13.3)		
Attending joint seminars/workshops/trainings	1 (6.7)	2 (13.3)	1 (6.7)	1 (6.7)	10 (66.7)

Table 18. Frequencies and percentage of the answers at the question 14, *Below there is a list of benefits you might expect from working together with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling (CGC) (Please indicate how important they might be for you)*

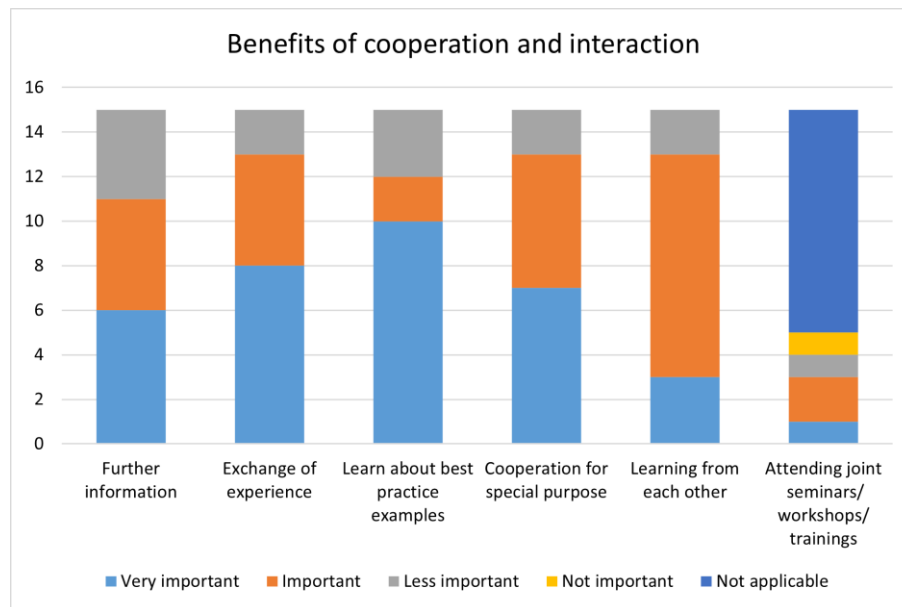


Figure 18. Benefits from cooperation with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling.

Qualitative interviews also highlight that some HRs consider training in career counseling important to know how decision-making works when people are looking for a job and know dimensions that play a role, but it is not considered founding for working as HR.

3.6. Challenging issues (qualitative analysis open questions 15, 16 and 17)

As concerns question 15 and the challenges for HRM development, Italian HRM highlighted that:

- Managers should have a lightened vision of the future: knowing tools for promoting the development of themselves, of the HR and all the employees, be more aware of their responsibilities also toward the community. They should promote continuing education as something that value business and not as something that takes time away from business. It is a big change in the way of thinking. The change could also imply that HR is part of the organization strategy not something external, especially in small companies
- Managing complexities and uncertainty, cope with unexpected situation like COVID-19. It had a big impact into the organization of work and a big effort in terms of work-life balance especially for woman who had all their life duties collapsed in their restricted home space and have no supports for children care. Consequently, promoting change, open mind, creativity is highly requested.
- Digitalization of HR and more in general of the work. This implies promoting digital skills in all employees
- Facilitate generational change in leadership
- Work life balance and talent management

- Promoting evaluation of performance, especially of the coherency of performance with goals. It is very difficult to operationalize
- Soft skills
- Managing feedbacks to low performers.

As concerns question 16, *How to cope with these challenges*, Italian HR highlighted the need to:

- Increase the frequency of meetings where the topic is the discussion of possible scenarios. Be proactive and do not suffer.
- Continue with ad hoc training for managers and implementation of HR tools such as "appraisal" and "people review" to have a map of the skills that are present in the company and a clear vision of who could be the talents and the specific career paths to be developed.
- Develop training courses that focus on practice, Coaching.
- Support networking and creating more and more opportunities for HR to know other professionals and share Best Practices
- Invest in the pre-work phase and not in the post-work phase, on schools and university, where the focus is on valuing competences
- Develop career plans with a progression path, setting realistic goals that make clear the level of investment that the company has on the employee
- Adapt training to new technologies (apps, gamification).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In general, data show that HR and CGC have a common understanding of the role of CGC in enterprises. Very few differences emerged that are mainly related to the idea that CGC works more with people who are not yet in the world of work, mainly youth who are at the beginning of the career counseling process. It seems HR does not have a clear awareness that CGC can collaborate with them into companies, work for workers' development, or they could benefit from some specific career counseling knowledge and competencies. On the contrary, the coaches seem more accepted into organizations as testified by the request made by one HR that asked for coaches in the qualitative answer.

4.1. Intersections of roles and tasks of HRM and CGC professionals in the professional life cycle

Both HR and CGC do not differ in their role in the professional life cycle. Dismissal and retirement are less relevant compared to recruitment, integration of new employees, development of professional and interpersonal skills. Management of Changes is for both groups the most important. These data suggest that both group of professionals mainly work with people who is at the beginning or in the middle of their career. Areas of dismissal and retirement could be areas to cover in the future by, for example, investing in age diversity management strategies. CGCs also suggest that most of their work is with people who are not yet into the world of work or are out of it.

The onboarding process is not a common practice for both groups. This is another area that could be part of training programs for both groups.

Different specializations areas emerge from the activities performed. Counseling for career decision and planning is more frequent for CGC. Providing career information and assessing career skills and competencies are more frequent in HR. Also, executing actions for social responsibility and taking initiative for quality development and innovation are more important for HR. Designing and managing programs for career development and training are similarly relevant in the two groups.

4.2. Motivation offering career guidance in enterprises

All the listed reasons for providing career counseling are considered important or very important by all the HR. Surprisingly for some CGC, these are in general less important. This could be related to the specific area of working of our CGC. Consistent with the common representation of the two occupations, career counseling is in general provided less often by HR than CGC for all the categories listed. HR provides more career counseling with highly talented persons and future managers than CGC.

The presence of vulnerabilities increases the probability of receiving less CGC, and this suggests future training should work for equipping professionals of those competencies that allow them to devote more attention and be effective in working with those who 'are not blonde with blue eyes'. This is in line with the SDGs.

All the listed issues of career counseling are addressed more than several times by both groups. HRs appear to work more often on Further education and training, and this is in line with the specific role they play.

Counseling is provided at the workplace and less out of the workplace. It is more often one to one than in a group. They prefer Self-reliant counseling to counseling with enterprise personnel. All these results suggest the need to be creative and innovate both professions. As some participants report, digitalization could be a strong resource that could help in change many traditional ways of working.

4.3. Updating of professional knowledge, skills, and competences

In general, both groups of practitioners consider important or very important all forms of education and study as well as the help from both internal and external peers and experts. The percentage of people who consider them not important, or not applicable is higher in the CGC. This supports the idea that both groups of professionals are open to many forms of continuing education.

4.4. Interactions/networking/cooperation

Interactions with stakeholders for both groups mainly happen few times a year or less, and nonetheless, half of them cooperate. Most respondents in both groups consider all the benefits listed important or very important. This suggests that for these professionals networking is important to performing well. Training programs should consider the opportunity of teaching 'managing networking'. As one participant noticed, they have money and can fund career counseling projects and initiatives as well as influence policy.

4.5. Challenging issues

The analysis of qualitative answers highlights some areas that could be of interest in thinking about training programs. These include:

- Digitalization, and in general technological advancement, for themselves as professionals and the workers
- Managing changes and uncertainty of future as well as the complexity of actual societies and living contexts that the world of work mirrors, and this might require focusing on approaches that put people at the core of the attention.
- Supporting a positive view of the profession, for example advertising good projects and activities with the employers aimed at co-building a change and visions that should become shared.
- Continuing education and people thriving are the added value of modern companies, and this should become an investment not only for the people but also for the organizations (i.e., loyalty to the organization)
- Promoting a fruitful dialogue among diverse practitioners to share *good practices* that in this time of pandemic are carried out with small groups of people and in the future could be applied with bigger groups of workers.
- And finally, making the relationships with universities and research centers more intense and reciprocal to include successful practices in teaching and research.