



## Section 1

### Chair Message

Dear colleagues in the NICE community,

The NICE Academy in Deventer that was a big success in terms of participation. We have vivid memories of the event organised in Deventer last September and the positive feedback participants sent us. At the same time, we are moving and working on the next year activities. We are delighted to confirm that our next academy will be in Malta from 10th to 13th September 2025. This academy will be dedicated to the memory, life and work of Professor Ronald Sultana.

The theme will be: Career Guidance for Sustainable Futures - Communities, Boundaries and Transitions. Keynotes already confirmed include Dr Deirdre Hughes, Professor Tristram Hooley, Dr Rosie Alexander, and from Malta we look forward to keynotes from Dr Gege Gatt, CEO of EBO, and others providing us with the local context for the academy and for practice. Registrations will open on 3rd February 2025, so don't miss out on the 'early bird' registration fee. The opportunity to submit proposals and abstracts will begin in March. Go to our website and keep up to date with developments and updates.

#### [NICE Foundation - Home](#)

In addition to the academy in Malta in 2025 it is also an election year for the NICE Board. Foundation members will all be invited to place their votes. If you would like to become a Foundation member so you too have a vote, please let me know.

If you are interested in joining the board of NICE and contributing to its ongoing developments and support for the training and development of practitioners in the careers sector, please do consider standing for election to one or more of the posts. If you would like to discuss any of these posts in more detail, please contact me directly and we can have a conversation about the role, responsibilities and processes. In this issue, besides the information about two interesting projects in Europe, the team taking care of the

Anne Chant \_ Chair of the NICE Foundation

Anne Chant  
Chair of the NICE Foundation

## Section 2

### Following NICE Academy



**Registrations will open on 3rd February 2025**  
**More information coming soon on [our website](#)**

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#### ECHOES FROM NICE ACADEMY 2024

**NICE ACADEMY 2024 AT DUTCH SAXION UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**  
**“THE FAMILY UNDER THE FLAG OF NICE FOUNDATION CAN HELP TO MEET ALL**  
**CURRENT AND FUTURE CAREER CHALLENGES”**

**BY PAUL SPENDEL.**

Participants from all over Europe, and even from Hong Kong, gathered in the auditorium of Saxion University of Applied Sciences. Jan Woldendorp is Lecturer Human Resources and Career Development at Saxion University of Applied Sciences and one of the organizers of the Deventer NICE Academy. After the welcome and official opening of the NICE Academy Jan synchronized the watches of all participants by summarizing the purpose and mission of the NICE Foundation: “That is to promote excellence and innovation in the academic, research-based education of career practitioners in Europe, although our influence and network now extends even further than Europe.”

#### **NICE Academy: annual flagship event**

A flagship event of each year is the NICE Academy, Jan emphasized: “In the NICE Academy members share information about developments in practice, education, and research. It also provides a space for sharing and networking to promote future innovations.” This year, Saxion University of Applied Sciences in Deventer was the host. Jan then introduced Anne

network. The reason of this network is to facilitate the sharing of good practices and innovative ideas. And: working as a career practitioner is quite lonely work. In most schools there are mostly only one or two people working as a career practitioner, so we need a community to bring all these specialists together. In alignment with the theme of the NICE Academy 2024 it is also incredibly important that we bring people together from different countries and diverse cultures and labour markets to fully understand what needs to be done. And helping to get people into the labour market and succeed from a European perspective and sometimes even world perspective. We cannot do that in our own little silos. We celebrate our second lustrum, so we look back at where the need came from and then we look forward to what we can do to help our practitioners to develop the skills and understand the need, because primary NICE is about enhancing and facilitating the development of career practice.”

### **Versatile talk show**

The opening of the NICE Academy 2024 was finalized with a versatile talk show. Jan Woldendorp functioned as the host and inspired with his questions to a lively debate among the participants. Leih Beelen is a career practitioner at James Loopbaan and Prentice Anderson is a Human Resource Management student at Saxion. Jouke Post has been a researcher at the Academy of Human Resources (AMA) and the Strategic HRM lectorate at Saxion since 2017. He is also career expert at James Loopbaan. Under the guidance of Jan, they discussed the theme of the spirit of career past, present & future. They answered urgent questions such as: where do we stand now? Where do we come from and what is yet to come? A fitting question was how the career family under the flag of NICE Foundation can help to meet all these challenges? The consensus after a lively debate was that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is here to stay and so are career specialists, but only if they adapt! This delicate adaptation and balance can best be accomplished under the professional guidance of the NICE Foundation!”

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## **The NICE Community Webinars**

### **EXPLORING GREEN GUIDANCE-SUSTAINABILITY AS PARADIGM CHANGE**

**Tuesday 21 January 2025 - 15:30 - 16:30 UTC**

**Tomáš Šprlák**, career counsellor, Association for Career Guidance and Career Development, Slovakia

**Mariana Lucas Casanova**, Post-doctoral researcher and Invited Adjunct Professor: Centre for Research and Innovation in Education (inED), School of Education, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal

**[More details for registration available soon](#)**

The multiple crisis of the Anthropocene present profound challenges to traditional paradigms and foundational models of career guidance. Climate change and ecological degradation are already shaping individuals' career decisions, influenced by shifts in the labor market, transformations in the educational system, and various psychosocial effects, such as climate anxiety. This evolving landscape has spurred the rise of a 'green guidance' movement, which explores how career guidance can not only adapt to but also mitigate the

This webinar will draw on a comprehensive literature review, insights from reflective workshops with practitioners across several countries, and practical experiences from the "Exploring Green Guidance" Erasmus project. It will introduce three distinct rationales underlying the theory and practice of green guidance: Technocratic – focused on aligning individuals with societal needs, such as by developing green skills, developmental – aimed at supporting people to navigate and thrive through the green transition, emancipatory – oriented toward empowering individuals to reshape their context and advocate for a socially just green transition.

The webinar will also address ethical challenges (such as impartiality and respect for individual choice) and examine practical strategies for integrating green guidance into career guidance practices.

### Section 3

## Career Guidance and Counselling and Innovative International Projects



**Name:** Digigen

**Project No.** 2021-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000025335

**Period:** 01.11.2021 - 31.10.2024

**Programme:** Erasmus+

**Website:** <http://digi-gen.eu>

**Stakeholders:** Higher education institutions, educators, researchers, employment agencies

***The program is addressed to:***

HR Practitioners, Career Counselors and Women in Management positions.

**The aim**

In 2020, the European Commission launched its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, focusing on enhancing women's roles in the labor market, ensuring they have equal opportunities to achieve their professional goals (European Commission, 2020). Despite this initiative, a significant gender gap persists in management positions, particularly as the demand for digital competencies continues to rise.

Digitalization requires not only the acquisition of digital skills but also the adoption of innovative work and learning models. Unfortunately, there is a noticeable lack of professional counseling for managers and organizations, especially regarding qualification counseling and competence development. To address this gap the DIGIGEN project seeks to develop, pilot, and evaluate a comprehensive up-skilling program tailored for HR

challenges of digital transformation in their careers. By focusing on practical training and real-world applications, the project aims to improve the career prospects of female leaders and promote their active participation in digital development.

In addition to creating a structured curriculum, the project also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between higher education institutions and industry partners. Through a dedicated web portal, participants will have access to a wealth of resources, including self-directed online courses and community features that foster networking and support.

Ultimately, the DIGIGEN project aspires to create a sustainable framework that not only enhances the skills of women in management but also promotes gender equality in leadership roles across various sectors. By addressing the pressing need for digital competencies and effective career guidance, DIGIGEN aims to pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future in the workforce.

### **PROJECT OUTPUTS**

The DIGIGEN up-skilling program is a thoughtfully designed educational initiative that specifically targets HR practitioners and career counselors. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by women in management positions, the program aims to equip these professionals with the essential tools and knowledge they need to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

At its core, the program features a robust curriculum that encompasses various modules covering crucial topics such as digital skills, leadership in a digital environment, and effective career counseling strategies. These modules are crafted not only to impart theoretical knowledge but also to provide practical applications, ensuring that participants can translate their learning into real-world scenarios. The program is delivered through flexible training formats, including engaging face-to-face workshops and online sessions, accommodating different learning preferences and enhancing accessibility for all participants. Regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms are integrated into the program to continuously refine and improve its offerings based on participant experiences and outcomes.

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### **AVAILABLE MATERIALS**

[All documents: Upskilling programme](#)

[Competence Profile: Literature Review and Needs Analysis](#)

### **AVAILABLE LANGUAGES**

Dutch, English, German, Lithuanian, Hungarian

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**Name:** Exploring Green Guidance

**Project No.** 2023-1-SK01-KA220-VET-000158513

**Period:** October 2023 - March 2026

**Programme:** Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic partnership for the Exchange of good practices in VET

**Website:** <https://www.green-guidance.eu/>

**Contact person:** [info@green-guidance.eu](mailto:info@green-guidance.eu) (Tomas Sprlak)

***The program is addressed to:***

Career counselors.

**The aim:**

Green guidance is a development of career guidance in which people are supported to make their education, training and employment choices with an awareness of and concern about the climate crisis and other environmental issues. Green guidance is not just about directing workers into a small subset of 'sustainable' industries, although it definitely addresses this, rather it is about helping people to understand the environmental impacts of their working lives and develop more positive and sustainable ways forward.

**PROJECT OUTPUTS**

- A green guidance handbook. This will define green guidance and set out an approach for delivering it. It will draw on extant research on the subject as well as findings gathered in the project to provide models, advice and examples for practitioners working in the field.
- A green guidance resource pack. Providing a series of practical tools for the delivery of green guidance based on experiences gathered from across partner countries. These are likely to include interview framework, lesson plans, learning resources, and curriculum and assessment schema.
- A sustainability audit tool for career guidance. This will provide a simple tool for practitioners, services and organisations to audit their existing practice and identify ways in which green guidance could be integrated into it.
- An impact report – summarizing the experience and recommendations from the implementation of green guidance into practice with different target groups
- Green Guidance Training: From Theory to Practice - intensive 5-day training program is designed for career practitioners seeking to integrate sustainable practices into their guidance approach (suited for Erasmus+ funding)

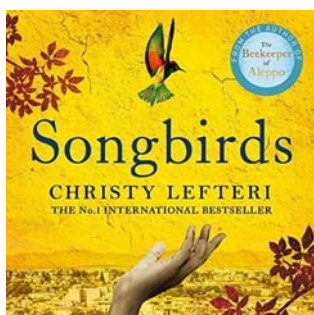
- Green Guidance Policy Review: Policies for a Green Transition <https://www.green-guidance.eu/resources/green-guidance-policy-review/>
- Green Guidance Survey Report: Practitioners' Perspectives on Green Guidance <https://www.green-guidance.eu/resources/green-guidance-survey-report/>
- Evidence on Green Guidance: A review of literature <https://www.green-guidance.eu/resources/evidence-on-green-guidance-a-review-of-the-literature/>

## AVAILABLE LANGUAGES

English

## Section 4 The Culture Club

### Career Stories in the Literature



#### SONGBIRDS by CHRISTY LEFTERI

**The Book:** Christy Lefteri's novel "Songbirds" is a poignant and impactful narrative that sheds light on the lives of migrant domestic workers, offering a compelling story about societal challenges and the quest for justice.

**The Setting:** The novel is set in contemporary Cyprus and centers around Nisha, a domestic worker from Sri Lanka who has left her daughter back home in hopes of providing a better future for her. She works for Petra, a widow and single mother, who relies heavily on Nisha to care for her daughter, Alik. Despite their close relationship, there is a significant social and emotional chasm between the two women, highlighting the imbalances inherent in their social status and ethnic background.

**The Character Arch:** Nisha's sudden disappearance marks the beginning of the novel's main events. Petra, initially unaware of Nisha's hardships, begins to search for her; only to face with the harsh realities inflicted upon domestic workers who are often invisible and voiceless in society. Her search brings her into contact with Yiannis, Nisha's secret lover, who works as a poacher of songbirds. Yiannis, wracked with guilt and sorrow, joins Petra in her quest, revealing their shared humanity and common pain.

**Reading into the Story:** "Songbirds" is not just a story about individual characters but also a critique of societal indifference towards migrant workers. Lefteri uses the metaphor of songbirds' creatures that are trapped and silenced' to draw parallels to the lives of these workers, who often endure exploitation and marginalization. Through Petra's awakening and the unfolding mystery of Nisha's fate, Lefteri explores themes of motherhood, sacrifice, and resilience. "Songbirds" challenges readers to reflect on the often unseen and unacknowledged sacrifices made by migrant workers, urging a call for compassion and change. This novel is a testament to the strength of those who endure unimaginable hardships and an urgent plea for recognizing and bettering social injustices.

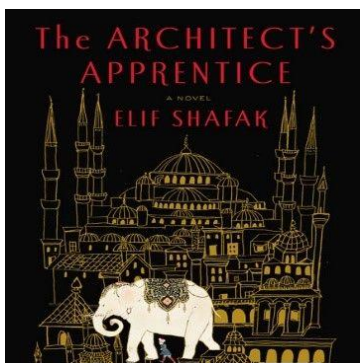


**The Book:** Elif Shafak's "The Island of Lost Trees" is a compelling novel that intertwines themes of love, loss, and identity across different cultures and time periods. The narrative unfolds in two primary settings: the politically tumultuous Cyprus of the 1970s and contemporary London.

**The Plot:** The story begins with Kostas and Defne; Kostas, a Greek Cypriot, and Defne, a Turkish Cypriot, navigate their relationship in secret, their bond growing stronger even as their divided community is on the verge of a war. A divided island serves as the backdrop for their love story, emphasizing the effects of political and cultural divides on individual lives. As the narrative shifts to the other setting, we meet Ada, the daughter of Kostas and Defne, in contemporary London. Ada is a teenager, struggling to navigate the intricacies of her bicultural background and the recent loss of her mother, Defne. Raised with little knowledge of her parents' past, Ada's journey is one of self-discovery and reconciliation with her identity. Her struggle reflects the broader theme of finding one's place in a world marked by cultural and historical upheaval.

**Symbolism:** A unique element of the book is the inclusion of an old fig tree, a silent witness to the love and pain experienced by the characters. The fig tree serves as a metaphor for memory and resilience, its roots symbolizing the deep connections between past and present, and its branches representing the reach towards healing and understanding.

**Underlying Themes:** "The Island of Lost Trees" is a narrative about the enduring impact of history on personal lives and the quest for belonging. Through the intertwined stories of Kostas, Defne, and Ada, Shafak explores how love can transcend political and cultural divides. The novel underscores the resilience of the human spirit and the healing power of understanding one's roots, ultimately portraying a poignant journey toward reconciliation and identity.



### THE ARCHITECT'S APPRENTICE by Elif SHAFAK

**The Book:** Elif Shafak's novel, "The Architect's Apprentice" immerses readers to the grandeur and complexity of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th Century. The narrative commences when Jahan, a juvenile Indian boy arrives in Istanbul and is tasked with taking care of a rare white elephant named Chota, a gift for Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, with whom he develops a deep connection.

**Settling In:** The central plot revolves around Jahan's journey from a humble mahout to the apprentice of the empire's most renowned architect, Mimar Sinan. Under Sinan's mentorship, Jahan learns the intricacies of architecture, contributing to magnificent constructions like the Suleymaniye Mosque. Throughout the novel, Jahan's relationship with Chota symbolizes loyalty, friendship, and the bond between humans and animals.



**Dualities:** The conflict between creation and destruction is a recurrent theme "The Architect's Apprentice". Jahan and Mimar Sinan's determination to create permanent beauty, is threatened by temporary political turmoil and political vendettas. The political machinations and courtly rivalries highlight the volatility of life within the empire. The narration fuses historical fact with fiction, bringing to life the opulence and brutality of the Ottoman court. Apart from being a historical account on the intricacies of Ottoman society and court, the book is also a meditation on art, the passage of time, and the enduring legacy of human creativity. As Jahan discovers, "Destroying a bridge was easier than building it." It takes time, skill, and patience to create, yet only moments to demolish. Shafak explores metaphorical bridge-building, too, between classes and cultures.

**Building Bridges:** This emotionally forceful novel demonstrates how hate and envy destroy, and how love might build the world anew. Jahan's and Sinan's efforts to construct architectural marvels in an environment with political unrest and threat underscore the novel's central themes. Their work symbolizes the broader, metaphorical bridges built between diverse peoples and cultures, demonstrating the profound impact of creation and love against the backdrop of destruction and hate.

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### Career Stories in the Literature:

#### Nazanin Hosseinkhani and Yaren Irmis interviewing Anne Chant

**Hosseinkhani:** Thank you for joining us to discuss books that highlight stories of individuals facing challenges, with a connection to career counseling. Let's start with *Songbirds* by Christy Lefteri. Could you share your general thoughts on this book?

**Chant:** I was drawn to *Songbirds* after reading Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. The book explores themes of migration, economic necessity, and historical impacts. While initially I didn't recognize its career counseling relevance, discussions with colleagues showed that considering individuals' full life stories is essential for effective career support. The book is profoundly moving and full of sadness.

**Hosseinkhani:** In the book, Nisha's career is driven by necessity. How can career counseling help individuals facing similar global challenges?

**Chant:** Career counseling alone has limitations, especially when access is restricted. While it can enhance self-esteem and awareness of rights, opportunities often remain scarce for marginalized groups. Career counseling should support community networks but must be realistic about its impact.

**Hosseinkhani:** Nisha navigates dual identities. How can career counseling help reconcile such professional and personal aspects under external pressures?

**Chant:** Counseling can help individuals recognize multiple identities and envision possible future paths. Narrative approaches are effective for highlighting barriers and autonomy, even when limited.

**Hosseinkhani:** Petra's eventual empathy in the book is significant. Could this foster a more inclusive environment for migrant workers?

**Chant:** Yes. Petra's realization demonstrates that understanding context is crucial. Creating inclusive environments benefits everyone but requires awareness and willingness to address uncomfortable truths.

**Hosseinkhani:** Yannis, another character, faces a morally complex career. How can career counseling support resilience and self-advocacy for such individuals?

positive paths, similar to supporting clients who have faced legal or ethical challenges.

**Irmis:** Moving to *The Island of Lost Trees* by Elif Shafak, how do political situations and personal history impact career decisions?

**Chant:** Shafak's work, with the symbolism of the fig tree as a witness to trauma, shows how political contexts influence personal lives and careers. It underscores that career counseling must consider the wider context, including family, culture, and history.

**Irmis:** Ada, a character in the book, carries the weight of her parents' trauma. How does unresolved family history affect career paths, and how can career counseling address this?

**Chant:** Knowing one's story is essential for deciding future paths. Family expectations shape decisions, even subconsciously. Counseling must consider these influences to understand an individual's choices.

**Irmis:** The fig tree symbolizes resilience and memory. Can symbolism be used in career counseling to explore personal histories?

**Chant:** Symbolism can be effective, helping clients see their stories from new perspectives. It's essential to adapt to clients' backgrounds, as symbolism doesn't work for everyone. Using narratives can help clients envision different future paths.

**Irmis:** Lastly, *The Architect's Apprentice* explores mentorship. How does mentorship help individuals overcome barriers?

**Chant:** The story highlights early examples of career management skills and the importance of recognizing and acting on mentorship. Jahan's journey shows the value of seizing opportunities, understanding networks, and maintaining values.

**Hosseinkhani:** How can different cultures and environments contribute to career counseling?

**Chant:** The contributions of different cultures are significant and often underestimated. Effective integration requires both the recognition of migrant strengths and the fostering of systems that support their contributions. Awareness must be raised in society to value these contributions properly.

**Anne Chant Closing Remarks:** It was a pleasure discussing these insightful books and their connections to career counseling. Thank you for the opportunity.



**The newsletter team:** Teresa Maria Sgaramalla, Nazanin Hosseinkhani, Yaren Irmis