A close-up photograph of a dark brown branch with several clusters of bright pink cherry blossoms. The flowers have five petals and prominent yellow stamens. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white and pink, suggesting more blossoms in the distance.

# COCAG: Working Group 3 Critical Practice in Career Guidance

Presentation for the launch conference,  
May 2025

Dr. Kristina Mariager-Anderson, Aarhus University

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# Working Groups



**Working Group 1 (WG1):**  
The challenges and  
changes in career in the  
contemporary world

**Working Group 2 (WG2):**  
Policy responses to  
contemporary challenges  
to individuals' careers

**Working Group 3 (WG3):**  
Critical practice in career  
guidance

# WG3 leading members



**Dr. Kristina Mariager-Anderson**  
WG3 Leader,  
University of Aarhus, Denmark



**Dr. Nurten Karacan Özdemir**  
WG3 vice leader,  
Hacettepe University, Türkiye



**Dr. Neha Basnet**  
WG3 vice leader,  
Wittenborg University of Applied  
Sciences, The Netherlands

# Purpose and Distinctiveness of WG3

- **Practice-oriented:** Direct focus on how critical perspectives are implemented in guidance practice
- **Practitioner involvement:** Facilitating mutual exchange between practitioners and researchers
- **Bridge-building:** Connecting theoretical insights with practical challenges
- **Application-focused:** Developing concrete tools and approaches for critical practice
- WG3 have approx. 180 members





# Theoretical foundation for Critical practice



# What are critical perspectives?

- Build a radical imaginary
- Address the use of power
- Unmask ideology
- View the individual as existing in a dialectical relationship with their context
- Recognise that human beings have a bounded but transformative capacity for agency

Thomsen, R., Hooley, T., & Mariager-Anderson, K. (2022). Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(4), 481-490.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2022.2106551>

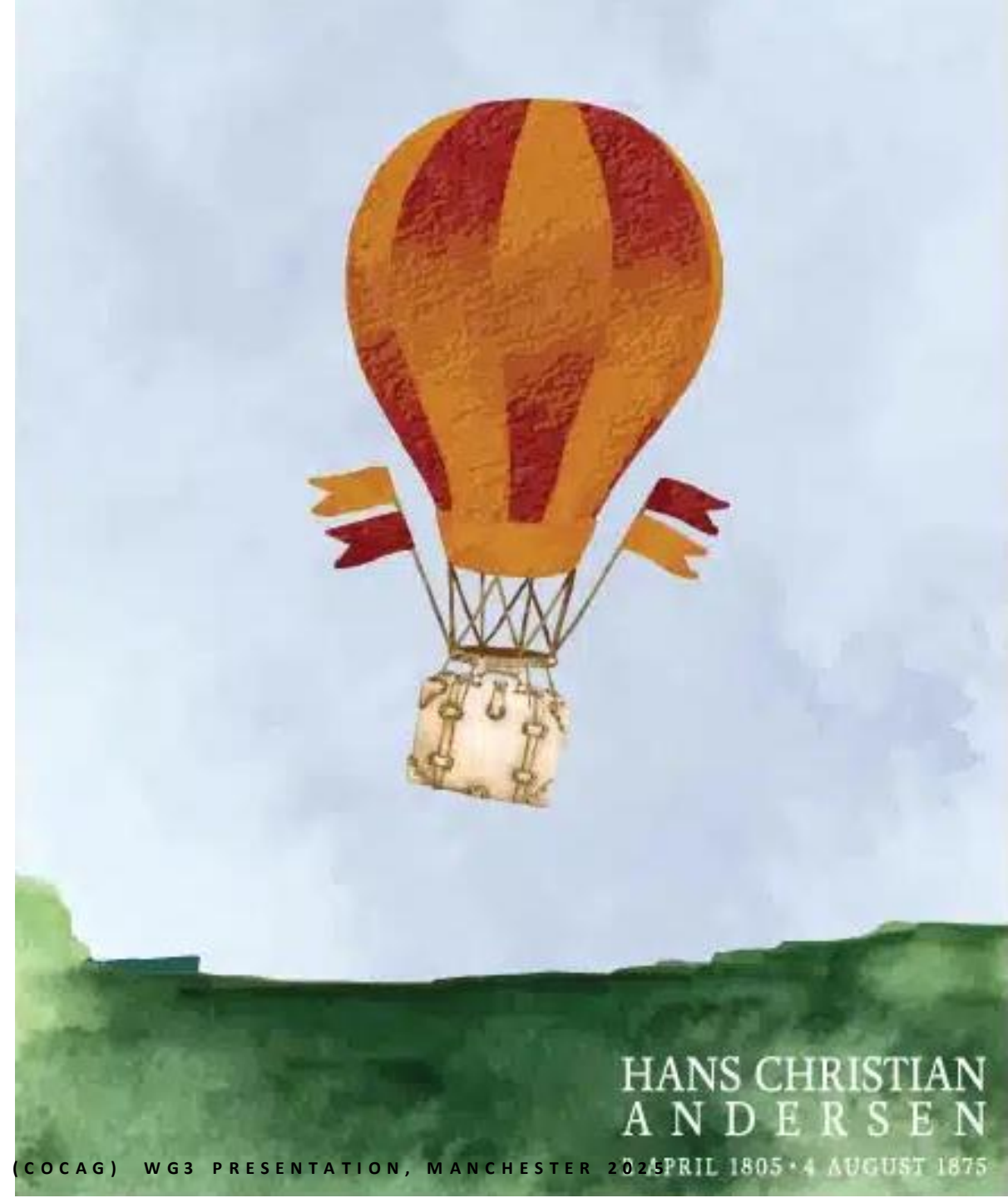


# Why is critical practice important?

- Career guidance occurs in changing social and political contexts
- Practitioners face complex challenges:
  - Socio-political changes
  - Environmental changes
  - Increasing diversity in society
  - Technological transformation (AI, digitalization)
- Practitioners need critical tools to navigate these complexities

# Our journey so far...

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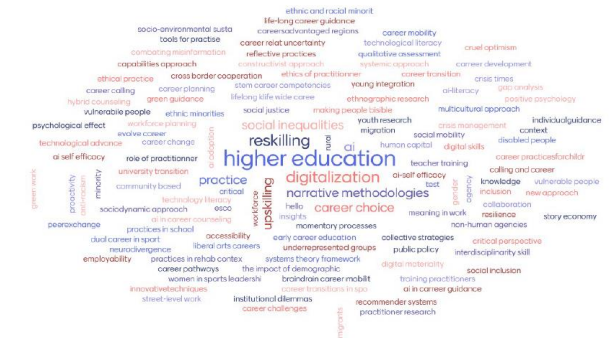


Write 3 keywords that best represent your research interests related to WG3

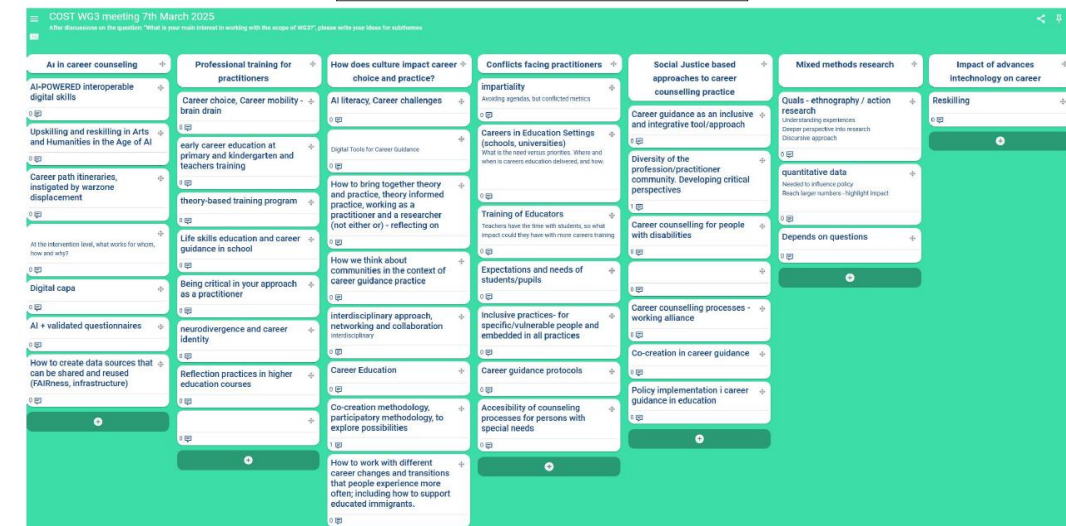
141 responses

# WG3 First meeting March 2025

- App 55 participants
- Establishment of the working group's purpose and framework
- Mapping members' research interests
- Participatory process via:
  - Word cloud with keywords (141 responses)
  - Digital task cards with research interests and ideas for sub-themes
  - Group discussions
- Prominent themes: higher education, career choice, practice, digitalization, social inequalities, reskilling, upskilling...
- Showing rich diversity of practice-oriented research interests



COCAG WG3 meeting 7th March 2025



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# WG3 Second Meeting April 2025 - Structuring Our Work



- App. 55 participant
- Presentation of survey analysis results
- Introduction of potential thematic directions
- 2-minute presentations from prospective subgroup leaders (7 presentations)
  - Research interests
  - Vision for their subgroup within WG3
- Open discussion and feedback on proposed structure
- Refinement of thematic focus areas based on practical relevance



# Development of themes



# 5 Thematic Subgroups



- Each subgroup has a practice focus and involves both researchers and practitioners
- Structured to ensure tangible outputs for the field of practice
- Inclusive and Social Justice Approaches as a cross-cutting perspective
- Each subgroup will contribute to the practitioner handbook



# Development of WG3 sub themes

Based on input from our word cloud, the task card, and survey

1<sup>st</sup> analysis identified preliminary themes  
*(based on word cloud and task cards)*

Technology & Digital Transformation in Career Guidance

Inclusive & Social Justice Approaches

Professional Development

Educational Settings and Life Stage Transitions

Cultural, Contextual Influences

Methodological Approaches & Research

Practitioner Challenges & Practice Development

**Inclusive and Social Justice Approaches** as cross-cutting perspective

2<sup>nd</sup> analysis incorporated survey data

1. Technology and Digital Transformation

2. Critical Professional Practice and Development

3. Educational Settings and Life Stage Transitions

4. Cultural, Contextual and Community-Based Influences

5. Methodologies and Knowledge Production

6. Career Crisis

7. Systems theory

*Suggested by members at 2nd meeting*

# 1. Technology and Digital Transformation

## Main focus:

- AI in career counseling
- Digital competencies for both counselors and clients
- Ethical implementation of technology in practice
- Practitioners' use of and response to new technologies



## 2. Critical Professional Practice and Development

### Main focus:

- Professional training for practitioners
- Critical reflection in practitioner development
- Connecting theory and practice
- Development of protocols and tools for practitioners



### 3. Educational Settings and Life Stage Transitions

#### Main focus:

- Career guidance in educational institutions
- Transitions between education and work
- Career choice and mobility
- Practical approaches to lifelong learning
- school settings, universities, NEET group



## 4. Cultural, Contextual and Community-Based Influences



### Main focus:

- Practitioner work in diverse cultural contexts
- Community-based career guidance
- Impact of socioeconomic factors
- Practical approaches to diversity and inclusion
- rural and urban places, different cultural groups



# 5. Methodologies and Knowledge Production

## Main focus:

- Practitioners as co-researchers
- Co-creation methodologies
- Participatory approaches
- Connection between research and practice



# Inclusive and Social Justice Approaches as Cross-cutting Perspective



- Integrated into all subgroups
- Focus areas:
  - Social justice approaches in career guidance
  - Inclusive practices for vulnerable groups
  - Addressing systemic barriers
  - Power dynamics in guidance relationships

# WG3 Deliverables

	M1-3	M4-6	M7-9	M10-12	M13-15	M16-18	M19-21	M22-24	M25-27	M28-30	M31-33	M34-36	M37-39	M40-42	M43-45	M46-48
<b>Action MC + Core group</b>																
T1. Development of the framework for M&E	■															
T2. Framework for YRI mobilities		■														
T3. Developing a framework for science communication			■													
D1. Publication of Science Communication plan			■													
T4. Website launch			■													
D2. Archiving of all publications and online materials																■
T5. COST action launch			■													
D3. Position paper					■											
T6. Development of edited book				■												
D4. Book publication					■										■	
T7. Development of YRI journal group				■												
D5. Publication of the YRI special issue					■										■	
T8. Research synthesis														■		
D6. Publication of the research synthesis																■
T9. Development of webinar programme				■												
D7. Archiving of webinars					■											■
<b>WG1: Challenges and changes in career</b>																
T10. Summer school				■												
T11. Scientific meeting						■										
D8. Research digest							■									
<b>WG2: Policy responses</b>																
T12. Summer school								■								
T13. Scientific meeting									■							
T14. Policy makers meeting										■						
D9. Policy maker publication											■					
<b>WG3: Critical practice</b>																
T15. Summer school											■					
T16. Scientific meeting												■				
T17. Practitioner conference													■			
D10. Practitioner handbook														■		

# WG3

## Deliverables



### **Summer School (M36)** October 2027

A week-long summer school for Young Researchers & Innovators.  
Build an international community of practice, mentoring, and knowledge sharing  
Strengthen the link between research and practice

### **Scientific Meeting (M38)** December 2027

A face-to-face scientific meeting on critical practice in career guidance  
Provide a platform for researchers to present work and discuss critical themes  
Insights that will inform future practitioner engagement

### **Practitioner Meeting (M42)** April 2028

A dialogue-based event for practitioners & researchers  
Bridge the gap between research and real-world career guidance practices  
Key insights to inform the upcoming Practitioner Handbook

### **Practitioner Handbook (M44)** June 2028

A handbook translating research insights into practical approaches  
Equip practitioners with cutting-edge guidance strategies  
A widely reviewed and practitioner-informed resource

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# The Practitioner Handbook - Key Deliverable

- Developed with and for practitioners
- Structure based on the thematic subgroups
- Content:
  - Practical approaches to critical practice
  - Case studies and examples
  - Reflection tools
  - Concrete methods and activities
- Published in both print and digital format, freely accessible





A purple rubber duck and a yellow rubber duck are floating in blue water. The purple duck is on the left, and the yellow duck is on the right. The water has a textured, wavy appearance. The title 'Participation and Collaboration' is written in white text over the water.

# Participation and Collaboration

# Involvement of Practitioners



- Shared research and practice groups
- Practitioners are invited to:
  - Participate in subgroups
  - Contribute case studies
  - Co-research in practice-oriented projects
  - Test and evaluate methods/approaches
  - Collaborate in developing the practitioner handbook





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# Moving forward

- **Subgroups being established May-June 2025**
- **First cycle of webinars starting autumn 2025**
- **Open invitation to join the subgroups**
- **Contact information:**
  - [Email]
  - [COST Action website]
  - [LinkedIn group]

A close-up photograph of pink cherry blossoms on dark, thin branches. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing prominent stamens. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white and pink, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall mood is gentle and celebratory.

THANK YOU!

PLEASE CONNECT ON  
LINKED-IN😊



# Ekstra slides



# Major Thematic Clusters (1)

## TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN CRITICAL CAREER GUIDANCE

### Potential research topics:

- AI in career counseling
- AI-powered interoperable digital skills
- Digital tools for career guidance
- AI literacy and career challenges
- Digital competencies & Digital literacy for both practitioners and clients
- AI based questionnaires
- Data sharing and reuse (FAIRness, infrastructure)
- Ethical implementation of AI in career counseling

## CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Potential research topics:

- Professional training for practitioners
- Critical reflection in practitioner development
- Theory-based training programs & How to bring together theory and practice
- Conflicts facing practitioners
- Career guidance protocols
- Co-creation in career guidance
- Upskilling and reskilling
- Training for specific contexts (education, social services, etc.)

# Major Thematic Clusters (2)

## EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS & LIFE STAGE TRANSITIONS

Potential research topics:

- Career education
- Early career education (primary/kindergarten)
- Career guidance in education settings (schools, universities)
- School-to-work transitions
- Career choice and mobility
- Life-long learning and mid-career transitions
- Policy implementation in career guidance in education

## CULTURAL & CONTEXTUAL AND COMMUNITY BASED INFLUENCES

Potential research topics:

- How culture impacts career choice and practice
- How we think about communities in context of career guidance
- Cultural dimensions of career development
- Community contexts and career guidance
- Impact of socioeconomic factors and displacement
- Neurodiversity and career identity formation

# Major Thematic Clusters (3)

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES & KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

### Potential research topics:

- Qualitative approaches
- Quantitative data
- Participatory methodology
- Mixed methods in career guidance research
- Interdisciplinary approaches
- Co-creation methodology

## INCLUSIVE & SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACHES (AS CROSS-CUTTING PERSPECTIVE)

- Social justice-based approaches to career counseling
- Career guidance as an inclusive and integrative approach
- Inclusive practices for specific/vulnerable groups
- Addressing systemic barriers in career guidance
- Developing culturally responsive approaches
- Power dynamics in career counseling relationships