

Navigating Uncertain Paths: Career Support among Roma Youth in Hungary and Spain

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COCAG LAUNCH EVENT

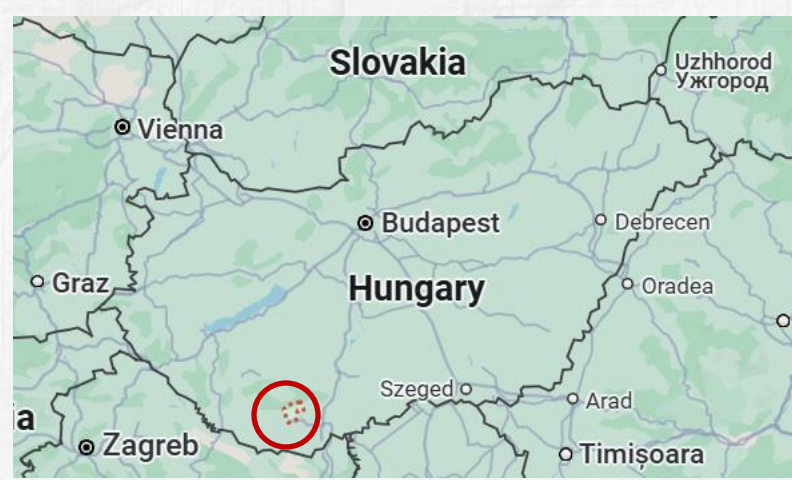
CAREER AND CAREER GUIDANCE IN EUROPE:
ASSESSING STRENGTHS AND ADDRESSING GAPS

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Aims and Methods

- Explore how disadvantaged Roma youth in Hungary and Spain make educational and early career decisions.
- who guides them and
- the role of formal/informal guidance during school-to-work transitions (STWT).
- Method: 35 life-course interviews (18–30 yrs) in 1 Hungarian city and 2 Catalan cities; selected illustrative case studies.



Key Findings

- Career guidance is fragmented, contingent, and insufficient.
- Roma youth rely mainly on **informal guidance**: family, peers, NGOs, ('unplanned happenstance')
- Formal guiding agents (teachers, PES, prof NGOs) play an overall marginal role.
 - School-based guidance is biased, brief, one-off, disconnected from labour market trends.
- Despite these challenges, some succeed via informal mentorship, second-chance education, ethnically targeting guidance provision.
- These trajectories reflect 'risk biographies' (Walther et al., 2005): careers shaped by reactive **improvisation**, not strategic planning.
- Perception of individual responsibility ('biographisation')

Research Gap

- Career guidance literature largely overlooks ethnic minority youth / racialised groups.
- Lack of empirical research on Roma youth experiences with guidance system.
- This study bridges that gap by centring on Roma voices and comparing contexts:
 - Spain: consolidated Southern European welfare model (Ferrera, 1996; Font Haro et al., 2023)
 - Hungary: emerging illiberal 'workfare' regime (Szikra & Öktem, 2023).

Main Take-Away

Roma youth in Hungary and Spain often make life-changing career choices without structured guidance. Their resilience highlights the urgent need for inclusive, coordinated, and justice-driven career guidance policies.


Contribution

- Introduces 'substituting guidance': improvised mix of informal/formal support.
- The more you need, the less access you have
- Shows that even short-term emotional support (mentoring, NGOs) can have long-term impact.
- Calls for lifelong, cross-sectoral, equity-oriented guidance systems.
- Calls for teachers' training for and awareness of the importance of LL career guidance


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Thank You



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