



Executive Agency, Education, Audiovisual and Culture

European Doctoral Programme  
in Career Guidance and Counselling

**ECA** **DOC**



Final Report

Public Part

## Project information

Project acronym: ECADOC

Project title: European Doctoral Programme in Career Guidance and Counselling

Project number: 539608-LLP-1-2013-1-IT-ERASMUS-EQR

Sub-programme or KA: Erasmus Multilateral Projects

Project website: <http://larios.psy.unipd.it/ecadoc/pages/index.php>

  

Reporting period: From 01/10/2013  
To 30/11/2016

Report version: Version 1.0

Date of preparation: 31/03/2017

  

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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## Executive Summary

The vision of the ECADOC project was to set up a sustainable European Doctoral Programme specialized on career guidance and counselling (CGC, our field) which offers highly promising graduates of European higher education institutions the opportunity of becoming the spearhead of CGC-related research and higher education in Europe (and thus perhaps throughout the world). The project aimed to attract diverse actors in the field, including higher education institutions, policy-makers, senior and junior researchers, and people involved in the academic training of career practitioners to invest into the development of career guidance and counselling as a specific area of multi-disciplinary research and training.

Concrete objectives of the project were to develop and validate a concept for summer schools and work out a research agenda for the area of career guidance and counselling. Furthermore, the project entailed numerous activities to build the sustainability of doctoral training in the field of CGC.

The ECADOC consortium involved higher education institutions from 15 European countries, which offer academic training in career guidance and counselling and bring together a multitude of disciplinary perspectives. The involved experts brought together state-of-the-art perspectives on qualitative, quantitative and collaborative research, academic writing, higher education and training, and the management of degree programs and projects, to offer an innovative training curriculum.

To foster collaborative learning on what kinds of structured doctoral training is relevant in the field of CGC, the project continuously consulted with doctoral researchers in the field and involved them in the evaluation of its activities. A common European research agenda was developed involving more than 100 experts from more than 30 countries in the mapping of current research and the collaborative description of gaps and challenges for the future (also involving policy and practice).

Three doctoral summer schools were organised, involving more than 100 doctoral and senior researchers from more than 30 countries. The summer schools received excellent ratings and were improved continuously through a quality assurance and enhancement strategy involving surveys, peer evaluation, and participant evaluation, among others. This report presents many of the key lessons learned.

The project has enjoyed a very high visibility through its website, five symposia at international conferences, the active promotion of doctoral researchers, numerous articles in diverse national and international newsletters. In 2017, “International Perspectives on Current Research in Career Guidance and Counselling” will appear, a book, which includes the research agenda and numerous articles for doctoral researchers involved in the programme - an important contribution to our field, and an important way of promoting ECADOC.

The sustainability of ECADOC has been secured for the next years. The next summer school will take place at the University of Applied Labour Studies in Mannheim from September 4-9, 2017 and another one is planned for Greece in 2018. The established committees are remaining active, and working with the established tools and procedures.

For more information, please visit: <http://larios.psy.unipd.it/ecadoc/>

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# 1. Project Objectives

The vision of the ECADOC project has been to set up a sustainable European Doctoral Programme specialised on career guidance and counselling (CGC/ our field) which offers highly promising graduates of European higher education institutions the opportunity of becoming the spearhead of CGC-related research and higher education in Europe (and thus perhaps throughout the world).

Closely connected with this vision is the ambition to create the structures and personal resources necessary for longitudinal, large scale, international research in our field. For this purpose, part of the project has been dedicated to the development of a common research agenda, which describes the status quo of research on CGC and highlights particularly important areas, where innovative, collaborative research is needed (“European Research Agenda”).

Due to the multidisciplinary, practice-orientation and specificity of our field, we have a lot to gain from joining forces in educating our most promising researchers: On the one hand, the number of promising doctoral candidates, available research projects and mentors will be large enough at European level to carry out such a program continuously (scale). On the other hand, considering how comparatively small – and partially isolated – academic research and training efforts in our field are nationally, we can gain significant momentum in positioning our discipline through close collaboration in promoting the next generation of academic leaders in our field in Europe.

To achieve this vision, our project has included the development and validation of a concept for doctoral training around CGC, including its implementation and enhancement through the organisation and evaluation of 3 summer schools for doctoral researchers from all over Europe, as well as online courses. Finally, an ambition of our project has been to ensure the sustainability of ECADOC, i.e., setting up structures for collaboration in doctoral training, agreeing on an accreditation scheme, etc.

In summary, the ECADOC project has aimed at (desired impact):

- Establishing research and higher education in our field at the European level,
- Increasing the competitiveness of doctoral education in the field of CGC, and promoting the development of top-notch academics in our field now, and in the future,
- Helping to overcome the lack of highly qualified academic leaders in our field, which prevents the development of specialised degree programs in some countries,
- Promoting international research collaboration at the European level at the level of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers to help setting up large-scale, interdisciplinary research clusters, and
- Supporting the development of a common, inter-disciplinary language and body of knowledge around CGC, as well as integrating perspectives of qualitative, quantitative and normative research on CGC.

## 2. Project Approach

To achieve our objectives, we have engaged in a wide range of activities, spanning from the development and dissemination of a common ideological foundation and a brand, over the development, implementation and validation of a concept for doctoral training, to the pursuit of different options to sustain ECADOC.

### 2.1 Ideological Underpinning

Scientific studies on inter-disciplinary collaboration emphasize the need for common goals, concepts, and frameworks, which bridge the perspectives of different disciplines.<sup>1</sup> We have engaged in several activities to develop this kind of common ideological foundation:

- We have contributed to the development of European Competence Standards (ECS) for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners<sup>2</sup>, ensuring that the standards for 'Career Specialists' at the PhD level correspond with the needs for specialists both in academia and practice, and that they resonate with the ECADOC programme.
- We have developed a first, common European research agenda (ERA): To achieve this product, we have engaged researchers from across Europe in a mapping exercise to clarify the status quo of research in our field. Consecutively, we have involved 100 stakeholders (policy-makers, career practitioners, HR managers, and academics) in a discussion, which priorities should be set for CGC-related research in the future.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the participants of the two first ECADOC summer schools, as well as UNESCO experts, have been involved in discussions of the ERA, to refine it. The final version of the ERA has been worked out as a chapter for a scientific publication, and undergone peer review to assure its quality.

### 2.2 Concept for Doctoral Training

Setting up a sustainable programme of international doctoral training involves numerous challenges, which need to be considered. An attractive course profile needs to be developed along with a training concept, which is fit for the target group. The concept needs to offer a good match of continuity and innovation, for the programme to develop and maintain a positive image. Application materials and procedures need to be established, as well as standard learning formats, which guarantee the continuous quality of the programme. The team running the

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<sup>1</sup> R. Defila, A. Di Giulio, and M. Scheuermann (2006). *Forschungsverbundmanagement. Handbuch für die Gestaltung inter- und transdisziplinärer Projekte*. Zurich: vdf.

<sup>2</sup> The ECS were developed by NICE from 2012-2015 with support from the European Commission, and have been published on [www.nice-network.eu](http://www.nice-network.eu) and in NICE (2016). *European Competence Standards for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners. NICE Handbook Volume II*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich.

<sup>3</sup> This discussion took place at the European Summit on Developing the Career Workforce of the Future in Canterbury, organised by NICE from September 3-4, 2014.

programme must develop a joint quality concept and routines of cooperation. We have engaged heavily to develop and validate our concept and programme:

- The scientific committee organised three summer schools of six days each, involving 28 doctoral researchers from across Europe each time (Padua 2014, Paris 2015, Lausanne 2016).
- Before the first summer school, we undertook a mix of qualitative and quantitative research to understand the participating diverse doctoral researchers' career situations, research and training needs, and interests.
- We collected feedback on the programmes of the summer schools in advance from all ECADOC colleagues and the invited participants.
- At the end of each summer school, we engaged the doctoral researchers in Delphi evaluations. This format allows each participant to stress positive aspects and points for improvement, which can then be endorsed by all other participants (so to see, by how many people the assessments are shared). Recommendations may include innovative ideas, e.g. the proposal to have several methodological workshops for each participant to choose from.
- At the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> summer schools, we involved an external evaluator, who provided us with critical feedback.
- After the summer schools, we conducted quantitative surveys, asking participants for feedback to standardised questions, and asking them about their interests for future summer schools and online training.
- Following the summer schools, we organised scientific committee meetings to discuss what we had learned, and plan the following summer school (next to other aspects).
- Finally, we organised two webinars – one on the statistical programme SPSS, the other on applying for research funding – and collected feedback from the lecturers.

### **2.3 Sustainability and Visibility of ECADOC**

The sustainability of an international doctoral programme, strongly depends on its quality. Only when former participants actively recommend the programme to fellow researchers, their supervisors, etc., will the programme draw enough attention to attract sufficient numbers of participants. However, we have also undertaken numerous other measures for the sustainability of ECADOC:

- We have maintained a website, which documents our activities, as well as a Moodle platform, where participants and other interested researchers can find course materials and even video recordings of workshops,
- We have engaged senior and junior researchers in discussions about ECADOC and the ERA at a series of ECADOC Symposia at international conferences, and disseminated relevant knowledge at these events,
- We have organised a new book series with Springer, which offers doctoral researchers in our field a special opportunity to publish their findings, and
- We have published numerous articles about ECADOC in diverse newsletters, and shared regular news with approximately 1.000 people across the world.

## 3. Project Outcomes & Results

### 3.1 Concept for Doctoral Training

Based on our ongoing quality enhancement strategy (see above), we have been able to validate the following four central goals for ECADOC summer schools, which we formulate from the perspective of our target group:

1. The participants want to use the summer schools to progress in their research personal research projects, and to develop their competences for the presentation and discussion of research in international, multidisciplinary settings.
2. The participants want to learn about state-of-the-art research approaches, methods and theories, and engage in critical discussions about scientific standards, methodologies, and research perspectives for the field of career guidance and counselling.
3. The participants seek involvement in a European research community for our field, want to develop their competences for interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration, and form ties with other specialists across Europe.
4. The participants seek inspiration and practical know-how regarding diverse career options, e.g. advice on scientific publications, training in the supervision of career practitioners, or techniques for strategic career planning.

The concept of the one-week ECADOC summer schools, including their classic components (collective academic supervision, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods workshops, networking activities, presentations and discussions on a wide range of topics) has been verified to suit these goals very well. The first summer school was already perceived very positively. Asked, how probably it would be for the participants to recommend an ECADOC summer school to another doctoral researcher, the average recommendation ratings of our last two summer schools were 9.0 (Paris, 2015, n=24) and 9.4 (Lausanne, 2016, n=20; on a scale from 1 to 10). 85% of our participants from Lausanne can be considered active promoters of ECADOC, in comparison to 66% in Paris: Obviously, our quality development activities have paid off. We are convinced that we have developed a format for summer schools, which will be appreciated in the future, and which we wish to continue offering in the future.

On the downside, our experience with ECADOC webinars hasn't convinced us to continue these efforts. While the participants of ECADOC summer schools expressed a strong interest in webinars, e.g., on the acquisition of funding, the participation rate of an offered webinar was very low. Our experience is that the use of the necessary technologies requires a large time investment both on behalf of the lecturers, and on behalf of the participants, and many participants still faced significant technological problems. Also, virtual meetings seem to be less attractive. Despite the very positive feedback, which the webinar providers received, we don't think the format justifies the massive efforts, which must be invested, when participation rates are lower than 10 people per course offer.



### **3.2 European Research Agenda & ECADOC Book Publication**

Using a participatory approach, whereby we involved about 150 specialists on career guidance and counselling from more than 30 European countries, we worked out a European Research Agenda (ERA). With the ERA, our summer schools will be based on a common research programme of important questions, which require multi-disciplinary, international research on career guidance and counselling. This research programme will hopefully help to increase the appreciation of diverse lines of investigation concerning career guidance and counselling, build bridges between different disciplines and areas of practice, and help to foster a European community of dedicated researchers and specialists.

The ECADOC programme has also convinced Springer, a large publishing house, to produce a special publication, featuring articles from participants of ECADOC summer schools, which have undergone a double-blind peer review for quality assurance, as well as the European Research Agenda. This high-profile publication, which will appear in 2017, will be available in print and as an eBook. Only the best submitted articles are featured in this publication (about 50% of the submitted proposals), with the ambition to realise a high-quality book series in the future. The book with its 13 chapters from a total of 37 authors marks the ideal beginning of the book series, which we envisaged, and is bound to gain international recognition – in part due to the inclusion of the research agenda and co-contributions from highly influential researchers in the field.

### **3.3 Sustainability and Visibility of ECADOC**

Through the three ECADOC summer schools, the website, articles in different newsletters, and five ECADOC symposia at international conferences, ECADOC has already enjoyed a great visibility around the World, and especially in Europe. The book publication and the European Research Agenda will further contribute to making ECADOC a brand name for European doctoral training in the domain of career guidance and counselling.

As indicated above, developing a sustainable doctoral programme has been one of our central goals. We have achieved this goal, insofar as

- Our scientific committee has decided to continue its work in the future,
- We are preparing the next two summer schools for September 4-9, 2017 in Mannheim (Germany) and 2018 (Athens),
- Most of the doctoral researchers who have participated at our past events either want to participate at future events, or have become active promoters of our summer schools,
- The ESVDC and the NICE Network, which initiated ECADOC, are committed to keep the programme running, and
- The University of Padova wants to support the sustainability of ECADOC by maintaining the website and the Moodle platform for the future.

## 4. Partnerships

ECADOC is a joint initiative of the European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counselling ([www.esvdc.org](http://www.esvdc.org)) and the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe ([www.nice-network.eu](http://www.nice-network.eu)). Through these two networks, ECADOC is well connected with researchers, lecturers and degree programs focusing on career guidance and counselling (CGC) in all European countries and far beyond.

An interdisciplinary training programme at doctoral level for academic leaders only makes sense and will be sustainable, if enough suitable candidates can be attracted regularly and can be provided with proper supervision. In our highly-specialised field of practice-oriented, multi-disciplinary research, cooperation at European level is imperative for our project for exactly this reason. Both the number of adequate supervisors and the number of potential candidates suggest for us to join forces at a supranational level. Bringing together 28 highly promising doctoral researchers for annual summer school on CGC would hardly be possible in any European nation. For countries without degree programmes in career guidance and counselling, this programme provides a strongly needed solution in developing the national capacities to set up specialised degree programmes and training programmes for career practitioners in the future.

Working together under a common European roof additionally helps the programme to foster internationalism and intercultural competence among the participants; and to consequently overcome nationalistic stereotypes and feelings of cultural superiority, which typically come from lack of exposure to actual developments in other countries. For the participants of our summer schools, the experience of working together for a week in a group of people from more than 20 countries, was overwhelmingly positive, as well as for the involved lecturers. Many of the participants, quickly feeling part of the ECADOC community, have expressed authentic feelings of sadness to return home after the events, and have maintained friendships and set up joint projects after the events.

The pooling of different good practices in doctoral training in our field, together with the research expertise from specialists of different national and disciplinary backgrounds, was highly beneficial for the quality of the doctoral programme. This assured the convergence of multiple disciplinary and cultural perspectives at the events, helped to assure the quality of learning, and of networking, since all disciplines and cultures felt welcomed.

Finally, ECADOC began to emerge into a living partnership between senior and junior researchers, expanding into a large, European community. Many of the doctoral researchers aren't primarily researchers, but career counsellors, HR managers, or school teachers, for instance, who wish to pursue careers outside of academia. Thereby, the summer schools have forged many new partnerships between research and practice.

## 5. Plans for the Future

Our central goals for the next three years are to continue organising annual summer schools, to establish organisational structures and an institutional framework, and to find sponsors, who can support the funding of future events.

Based on our validated and refined concept for summer schools for doctoral researchers working on PhDs related to career guidance and counselling, we plan to organise summer schools each year, in the future. We have already found a sponsor for the 4<sup>th</sup> ECADOC summer school, which shall take place at the University of Applied Labour Studies in Mannheim, Germany, hosted by Prof Peter Weber, a valued member of our scientific committee. Fortunately, the hosting organisation is even able to contribute some funding to this event, so to cover part of its costs. We already have offers for summer schools in 2018 and 2019, but the dates and resources aren't confirmed yet.

For 2017, the existing committees of ECADOC have promised to continue their work as in the past three years, especially the scientific committee and the selection committee. These two groups will support the organisation of the next summer school. Furthermore, the current scientific committee will take steps to institutionalize ECADOC. The concrete organisational form isn't clear yet. However, for the sustainability of ECADOC, we believe that a legal body will be beneficial. The ESVDC and NICE Foundation have already declared their willingness to carry ECADOC in the future, and perhaps nominate the scientific committee in the future.

In general, the main organisation of the summer schools shall be passed on every year from host to host. Future hosts shall also be involved in the organisation of prior summer schools, so that we can pass on our tacit knowledge and assure the continuous quality development of the programme. A plan is also to engage alumni of ECADOC summer schools actively to keep our community alive and support the longevity of the ECADOC leadership. We want to ensure that a good balance of continuity and innovation.

An institutional setup, ideally as a non-profit organisation, will hopefully enable us to raise (regular) funds in the future, e.g. annual scholarships for summer school participants from different regions of Europe, World scholarships to participants from outside of Europe, and funds for the actual events. Of course, we will also apply for specific summer school grants, where and when these are available, and try to make use of Erasmus+ mobility funding as far as possible. However, we know from some of our past ECADOC participants that they wouldn't have been able to receive Erasmus funding through their universities, e.g., because of intra-institutional conflicts, or because they aren't employed at the universities.

Finally, drawing on the international network, which we have established through ECADOC, and building on the ERA, diverse collaborative research and development projects are in progress or in planning. We hope to deepen our ties, and are preparing to acquire grants for large-scale projects in the future.

## 6. Contribution to EU Policies

ECADOC aimed at improving the quality and relevance of higher education, particularly to “recognize and incentivize the role of excellent teachers in student success” and to “attune curricula to current and emerging labour market demands”.

The programme let doctoral researchers, many of whom may become academic teachers and trainers in the future (or are so already), experience competence-oriented training first-hand – training, which drew on blended-learning approaches, challenging group activities, active engagement, and promoted self-directed, reflective learning. To enhance reflection about high-quality teaching and learning, we consulted the participants about their preferences, welcomed them in an atmosphere of openness and mutual support, engaged them in the evaluation of the summer schools, and introduced them to diverse techniques of networking, discussion and group work, which shift the focus to student-centred learning.

We also consider this aspect particularly important to contribute to the EU Innovation policies. To make the knowledge triangle work, researchers need to understand themselves as people, who don't only create knowledge, but also make state-of-the-art knowledge accessible for a wide range of stakeholders, particularly through education and training. This aspect is endorsed strongly through the European Competence Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling of the NICE network, the development of which we have supported strongly through the ECADOC project, particularly for PhD level training in the area. We also trained the participants communication skills by challenging them to present in front of international, multi-disciplinary audiences, thereby having to take the perspectives of people from other countries and disciplines of thinking, and receive feedback from these groups. Diverse workshops additionally confronted the PhD students with real-world problems related to career support, e.g., dealing with massive, sudden unemployment in countries like Greece, addressing European policy objectives, or offering professional supervision to practitioners of career guidance and counselling.

Regarding the attunement of curricula to current and emerging labour-market needs, ECADOC endorses research-based training in five domains of professional practice, which have been identified as crucial for career guidance and counselling by NICE ([www.nice-network.eu](http://www.nice-network.eu)). The ECADOC summer schools multi-disciplinary focus brings together people with very different perspectives on career support, e.g., from the management of career services, school education, career coaching in multinational organisations, psychological support units for people from marginalized groups (e.g., people with disabilities), and labour-market statisticians. ECADOC challenges its participants to become ‘career specialists’ with a special focus, but with a joint concern on high-quality career support for citizens, and an appreciation of the other perspectives. Through our curricula, we try to build skills for trans-disciplinary collaboration. Bringing peers from different nations, but with common interests together, additionally fosters the sharing of highly specialized knowledge and good practices, between the participants.

## 7. Quality Strategy & Key Insights

So far, we have organised three ECADOC summer schools, involving about 100 PhD and senior researchers from more than 30 countries. Our quality concept is a central outcome of our project, which we want to maintain in the future. It has supported us in arriving at key insights, which make up the quality of the ECADOC summer schools, and which we would like to share with other providers of doctoral training.

### 7.1 Quality Strategy

To secure the quality of the summer schools, we combine several measures:

**Selection of participants:** We only admit people to ECADOC summer schools as participants, who are currently working on a PhD related to career guidance and counselling. No exceptions are allowed, so to ensure the common goals, status and interests of the group in this respect. To assess the relevance of the research projects, our selection committee reviews a 1-page description of the PhD research project from each participant. Our selection criteria demand a broad national diversity of the participants, and we try to offer financial support in cases, where applicants wouldn't be able to cover their costs for the summer school themselves or through their universities. We accept no more than 28 participants, to assure a good group size for networking and community building. Each member of the selection committee evaluates the applications of all applicants, so to enable fair, criteria-based judgments when there are too many suitable applicants.

**Understanding the participants' interests and preferences:** Before the first summer schools, we asked participants for feedback on the objectives of the summer schools, and on their training preferences, using online surveys. Since the second summer school, we have begun to ask for ideas, wishes and recommendations from participants regarding future summer schools via a joint Delphi evaluation at the end of the summer school, and a quantitative evaluation several weeks after the summer school. The Delphi evaluation allows each participant to stress positive aspects and points for improvement, which can then be endorsed by all other participants (so to see, how many people share the assessments). The quantitative survey then asks for feedback to standardised questions (e.g. quality of each workshop, distribution of time to different activities). Participants are also asked to specify, which kinds of workshops, contents, and activities they would enjoy in the future, allowing them to formulate their personal interests and preferences freely.

**Peer review of summer school:** The scientific committee puts together the summer school's programme, under the leadership of the summer school's host. Once a first draft is ready, we collect feedback from the community of senior academics who jointly support the programme. We try to implement as many proposals as possible to enhance the programme. At the summer schools, we invite a colleague with a lot of experience in the supervision of doctoral researchers to observe all activities of the summer schools and to speak with participants, so to provide us with critically-constructive feedback after the event. We ensure that our peer evaluators don't have a conflict of interest in terms of evaluating their own work, but we believe it to be good that they are members of our academic community, who themselves want the summer schools to be excellent.

**Preparatory activities expected from contributors:** All contributors, particularly people offering workshops, methodological seminars, keynotes, and food for thought, are asked to provide an abstract. The scientific committee uses these abstracts to finalise the programme and to ask contributors for adjustments, if necessary. We expect workshops and seminars to dedicate at least half of the time to activities, which actively involve the participants, e.g., group discussions or exercises. Additionally, contributors are asked to provide literature for deepened learning, which is made available to participants via a Moodle platform. Contributors are also asked to constructively work with the diversity (age, academic disciplines, research paradigms, English-speaking competence) of the participants.

**Preparatory activities expected from all participants:** We are convinced that the participants' preparation for the summer school activities is just as important for the quality and enjoyment of learning, as our own preparation. All participants are required to engage in preparatory activities, including the preparation of poster presentations of their research projects (beginning with the third summer school), and the preparation of a presentation for collective academic supervision. Collective academic supervision is the point of the summer school, where the participants work together in small groups of four doctoral researchers, moderated by senior academics, where each participant shares a challenge of her/his PhD project, and receives feedback from peers.

**Scientific committee monitoring at the summer school:** During the summer schools, at least one member of the scientific committee is always present, so to keep an eye on the process, and intervene, if necessary. The summer school's host is relieved from any sorts of supervisory activities, to be able to focus on the management of the event. The members of the scientific committee regularly touch base to discuss the development of the summer school, and make changes to the programme, if necessary.

**Community building:** Developing a European research community is both a goal of our summer schools, and a means of quality assurance. We want our participants to enjoy a community spirit at the summer schools, including (but not limited to) a culture of mutual respect, openness to diversity, authenticity, and inclusiveness. At the beginning of the summer schools, we organise ice-breaking activities to evoke an ambiance, where everybody feels safe to speak with anyone else, seeking for commonalities, but also accepting differences (in line with Scott Peck's approach to community building). As scientific committee members, we try to lead by example, and intervene, where necessary, to support a positive community-building process and the development of shared norms of fairness, respect, inclusiveness, scientific rigour, etc.

## 7.2 Key Insights

One of our original ideas for the summer schools was that full-day workshops, e.g., intensive training in a methodological approach, could be a central trademark of the ECADOC summer schools. From trying out different variations of such workshops, we have learned that the participants find them too long. They generally prefer a wider variety of training options. At the third summer school, we tried offering several methodological workshops in parallel, for the first time – based on the participants' feedback from the second event: The ability to choose from four qualitative

workshops on one day, and from three quantitative workshops on another day, was valued highly by the participants. Regarding the quality of the methodological workshops, we have learned that the participants' main desire is to receive practical hands-on training at the event, and consume the relevant theory beforehand. Since we want all participants to advance in terms of both qualitative and quantitative research methodology, we make sure that some of the offered workshops are at an introductory level, whereas other workshops are for advanced learners.

The participants' favourite part of the ECADOC summer schools are the collective academic supervision (CAS) sessions.<sup>4</sup> We introduced the CAS method to give maximum attention to our participants' needs when presenting a piece of their dissertation projects, and to avoid the various pitfalls of human interaction, which can sabotage a meaningful learning experience. As of the third summer school, we have all begun to use this method, and almost all participants have found the experience "excellent".

Another favourite of our summer schools so far, have been few, selected keynotes on topics related to career guidance and counselling. What we have learned in this respect is that the participants particularly enjoy the ability to engage in discussion after such keynotes, e.g., using a combination of small-group and plenary discussion. In our selection of keynote topics, we try to have contributions from different disciplinary perspectives, as well as from the perspectives of practice and policy.

A central challenge of the summer schools has been the participants' wish to get to know each other's research, to identify peers with related interests, and to develop ideas for potential joint projects in the future. At the third summer school, we tested out a former participant's proposal to organise a poster exhibition at the beginning of the summer schools, where each participant presents their research project. We opened the exhibition on the first evening with food and cocktails and exhibited the posters the full week, which worked splendidly. On the last day of the second summer school, we invited several groups from the first summer school, who had undertaken joint research projects, to present their work. Then, we invited the participants to take an hour to envision joint research projects together. We were amazed to see how self-organised groups emerged within a short amount of time, and how all the participants developed ideas for potential cooperation in the future.

On a final note, we have learned that participants wish for concentrated breaks and structured networking activities during "learning hours", and for enough leisure time in the afternoons and evenings. We have experimented with different variations in the past three summer schools.

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<sup>4</sup> The following two articles present the CAS method in depth: (1) Nordentoft, H. M., Thomsen, R., & Wichmann-Hansen, G. (2013). Collective academic supervision: a model for participation and learning in higher education. *Higher Education*, 65(5), 581-593. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-012-9564-x, and (2) Wichmann-Hansen, G., Thomsen, R., & Nordentoft, H. M. (2015). Challenges in Collective Academic Supervision: supervisors' experiences from a Master Programme in Guidance and Counselling. *Higher Education*, 70(1), 19-33. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-014-9821-2

