



**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM on  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT and PUBLIC POLICY**

*Shaping the future: Connecting career development and workforce development*



# **COUNTRY PAPERS**

for the

## **INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM on CAREER DEVELOPMENT and PUBLIC POLICY**

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### Themes addressed in country papers

Country	Human capital	Labour supply	Employability skills	Career development services for workforce development	Older workers	The information base for public policy making
1. Australia	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Austria		X	X	X		
3. Botswana	X		X		X	
4. Canada	X			X		X
5. Denmark		X	X			
6. Finland		X	X			X
7. India	X		X			
8. Ireland		X	X			X
9. Italy				X	X	
10. Latvia			X	X		
11. New Zealand		X	X			
12. Norway	X	X				
13. Oman	X			X		
14. Poland				X		
15. South Africa	X			X		
16. UK	X			X		X
17. USA			X	X	X	
Total Countries	8	7	10	10	4	5



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# Australia

## **Topics covered:**

Human capital  
Labour supply  
Employability skills  
Career development services for workforce development  
Older workers  
The information base for public policy making

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## **The Australian Context**

Australia is a continent of 7.69 million square kilometres with a population approaching 21 million people. 24% of Australians were born overseas; 80% live within 100km of the coast and 67% are urban dwellers. 55% of Australians between the age of 25 and 64 years have a vocational or higher education qualification. Half of the workforce in 2003-4 was in the 45-64 age range, up from 24% a decade earlier. The unemployment rate is 5.2% and the workforce participation rate 63.3%.

Constitutionally, Australia has a federal structure, with major governmental responsibilities divided between the federal, six state and two territory governments. There are also 673 local governments across the nation that have responsibility for local planning and the provision of services such as libraries. The states and territories have primary responsibility for education and training with additional funding provided by the federal government, whereas public employment policy and service provision is a federal responsibility. This includes social welfare policy.

At the federal government level, responsibility for education and training resides within the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and employment is the responsibility of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). Departmental arrangements vary in the states/territories. There are a number of key forums for progressing joint federal/state/territory decisions. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and members comprise state Premiers, territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments. COAG recently agreed to a new National Reform Agenda designed to deliver social and economic benefits. One of the three streams of the Reform Agenda is human capital development, so issues relating to education, training and labour market participation will now also be considered by COAG in coming years (COAG, 2006).

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) oversees some policy developments that cross all educational sectors. One such area is career development. Much of the momentum for national career development initiatives has been progressed through committees established by MCEETYA, including the National Careers Taskforce, the Transition from School Taskforce, and the newly established Career Development and Employment working group.

A number of national workforce development issues, especially those that relate to the vocational education and training sector are considered by another Ministerial Council - the Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education (NCVTE).

## **Career Development in Australia**

The Australian career development industry is extremely diverse (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2002). This can be seen in the range of occupational titles found in the industry, for example, career counsellor, employment counsellor, career teacher, work development officer, career coach, and vocational rehabilitation worker. It can also be seen in the nature and needs of the client groups served, and the sectors in which career development work is located including schools, transition programs, technical and further education (TAFE) institutes, universities, job network services, and the private sector (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, 2002b). In Australia, the private guidance sector is strong and has been boosted by "government policies to contract out public services which are free to the user" (OECD, p. 12).

The creation of a coherent workforce development system, which is inclusive of career development and that connects the work of all governments and portfolios, is an enormous challenge. In light of this, considerable progress has been made since the first International Symposium.

## A Brief History Since Symposium 1999

The Australia Country Paper presented at the first International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy concluded that the most pressing issue facing the career industry in Australia was to identify appropriate and cost effective models of leadership in:

- policy, practice, research and development;
- the delivery of quality career information;
- professional standards for practitioners at all levels; and
- industry involvement (McCowan & Mountain, 1999, p.12)

These themes recurred in the Australia Country paper of the second International Symposium (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2002) and also in the Australia Country Note prepared for the OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies (OECD; 2002b).

Since then, we have seen some significant developments including:

2002

- The launching of **myfuture.edu.au**, an interactive, online career information service - a joint initiative of federal, state and territory governments, implemented through education.au, a ministerially owned company.

2003

- The formation of the **Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA)**. CICA's mission is the development of a career development culture within Australia. It consists of 12 member associations that represent career development practitioners from a broad range of areas. The formation of CICA has provided leadership and a united voice for the career industry. It has facilitated a good working relationship with the federal government Department of Education, Science and Training.
- The development of the **Australian Blueprint for Career Development** – a framework designed to create comprehensive, effective and measurable career development programs, based on US and Canadian work.

2005

- The introduction of **Australian Career Development Studies** - three learning programmes for career practitioners and those who have an interest in fostering the career development of others. Two of the three learning programmes can be counted towards formally recognised qualifications.
- The adoption by several State/Territory governments of career development strategies as part of broader **workforce development strategies**.
- The establishment of **Careers Advice Australia**, a comprehensive national career and transition support network for young Australians from 13 to 19 years of age. It is designed to improve the career choices of young people and increase levels of student engagement.
- A report on the feasibility of establishing an **Institute for Leadership in Career Development**.
- The adoption of **Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners** by CICA and all of its member associations. By 2012 all career development practitioners in Australia will meet minimum qualification standards, engage in continuing professional development, and work according to a Code of Ethics.

2006

- An Australia-wide trial of the Blueprint will occur in 2006-07 in all states and territories and in a range of situations.

This provides the context for addressing the Symposium 2006 themes.

## **Symposium Themes – An Australian Overview**

All governments, in their recent commitment to provide “Australians with the opportunities and choices they need to lead active and productive lives” (COAG, 2006, p. 2), have agreed that investment in the skills and knowledge of people (workforce development) is an important driver of economic growth.

If we are to achieve this national goal, it will be critical to engage as many Australians as possible in learning and work – that is, fostering the intentional career (life/learning/work) development of individuals.

### ***Human Capital***

The OECD defines human capital as the knowledge, skills and competencies of the workforce and views it as critical to the economic growth and development of nations (OECD, 2002a). This narrow view of human capital focuses on the work capacities of individuals, particularly measurable skills, which, with education, account for less than half of individual wage differences in OECD countries (OECD, 2002a).

A wider view of human capital relates to the ability of individuals to develop, manage, and deploy their knowledge, skills and competencies. Wider human capital also encompasses the concept of ‘psychological capital’ – personality traits, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability, that significantly influence the productivity of labour. Self-concept accounts for approximately 20-30% of an individual’s work performance (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998; Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997), and affects important outcomes such as employment status, wages, job satisfaction and job commitment.

Historically, in Australia and elsewhere, labour market programmes and policies have focussed attention on developing the narrower concept of human capital (knowledge, skills, and experience) and less attention has been directed at enhancing the ‘wider human capital’ components. Focusing more on the wider concept of human capital provides an opportunity to develop new policy and programme initiatives to more fully develop human capital.

There is widespread agreement, as reflected in the COAG National Reform Agenda, that education, training and health care can help increase human capital. There is also agreement that the motivation of individuals affects the store of human capital that is available for productive work. So organisations and government service providers need to:

- better understand what determines individual motivation;
- understand how the social context of a person’s life impacts on human capital;
- identify strategies to promote the development of, and investment in, wider human capital.

The development of human capital is dependent on an individual’s ability to identify and manage learning needs, learn, and optimise the use of learning through career planning, job search skills, and managing work life balance. Social infrastructure needs to support this.

Wider human capital and career development are closely related through their holistic emphasis on self-management in relation to all facets of work, learning and life. In this context, career development services are both a public good benefiting society and governments, and a private good that benefits individuals (Watts, 1999). Career development can improve the efficiency of labour markets and education systems, support key policy objectives ranging from lifelong learning to social equity, and enable people to build human capital and employability throughout their lives (OECD, 2003a). The National Reform Agenda, with its focus on human capital, offers Australia the opportunity to identify and develop career development services that build all aspects of human capital in order to achieve both social and economic goals.

### ***Labour Supply***

“Australia’s overall labour force participation rate ranks as only 12<sup>th</sup> highest among OECD nations (OECD, 2005a). There is scope to significantly improve the participation of older workers, sole parents and second

earners, those with mild disabilities, indigenous Australia, part-time workers willing to contribute more hours, and those with a low skill base.” (Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Treasury and Finance, Victoria, 2005, p.18).

The decisions people make about their participation in the labour market are influenced by the interaction of their own life circumstances, including their level of education and their understanding of the labour market, by the decisions and behaviours of employers and by public policies. Career development services assist individuals to understand and manage the interaction of these forces, sometimes competing, in ways that maximise their labour force participation.

The goal of career development services is to encourage people “to make the best possible use of their talents and capacities” (Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Treasury and Finance, Victoria, 2005, p.38) - a goal that has informed the recent third wave of national reform.

An intentional career development process that enables individuals to clarify and articulate their aims and aspirations and to understand the opportunities and needs of the labour market will help to engage/re-engage them in learning and work. Unexamined careers are not under the control of individuals.

In terms of labour supply, underutilised labour market groups, such as those who have disengaged, people with a disability, women returning to the workforce, refugees and sole parents, need assistance to develop the eleven career management competencies (listed below) of the *Australian Blueprint*. The Blueprint will equip them with foundational competencies including, labour market knowledge and confidence that other groups take for granted.

- Competency 1. Build and maintain a positive self-image
- Competency 2. Interact positively and effectively with others
- Competency 3. Change and grow throughout life
- Competency 4. Participate in life-long learning supportive of career goals
- Competency 5. Locate and effectively use career information
- Competency 6. Understand the relationship between work, society and the economy
- Competency 7. Secure/create and maintain work
- Competency 8. Make career enhancing decisions
- Competency 9. Maintain balanced life and work roles
- Competency 10. Understand the changing nature of life and work roles
- Competency 11. Understand, engage in and manage the career building process

On the demand side, employers, education and training providers and governments must also work to remove barriers, and recognise the need to create learning and working arrangements that suit the circumstances of individual employees. A focus on individual achievement is needed to improve the effectiveness of the education and training system. Disincentives and barriers to labour force participation must be removed if all people are able to make the best use of their talents and capabilities (Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Treasury and Finance, Victoria, 2005, p. 22).

In conjunction with industries and individual employers, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations is identifying those industries with the best scope to provide job opportunities and developing, with small grant funding, innovative recruitment, employment and retention strategies to increase participation of people with a disability, mature age job seekers, parents and the very long-term unemployed.

In summary, an effective workforce development system/strategy is one that is built upon reciprocity. Intentionally fostering the career development of individuals is a critical element, however employer and government policies, regulations and practices must also work to remove all disincentives for people who wish to participate in the labour market.

## ***Employability Skills***

Australia has recognised the importance of equipping individuals with employability skills and career development skills. Two significant frameworks have been produced, specifically the *Employability Skills for the Future* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2002) and the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* (ABCD; Miles Morgan, 2004).

The ABCD, adapted for Australian use from the *Canadian Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* identifies 11 career self-management competencies across the lifespan. The *Employability Skills for the Future* report identified 13 personal attributes and eight key skills that contribute to overall employability.

The frameworks are complementary and interdependent. There are linkages and similarities, but neither the competencies nor the intentions of the frameworks are identical. Equipping individuals with career management skills guides them towards their preferred work/life futures and equips them to actively manage their own career development. Equipping individuals with employability skills, on the other hand, ensures that they possess the key generic competencies that employers require.

Adoption of the Employability Skills Framework is most evident in the vocational and technical education sector and by employment service providers. The ten national Industry Skills Councils are currently reviewing all Training Packages, and where employability skills are required, making modifications to competency standards to accurately reflect industry requirements. Schools, on the other hand, have been early adopters of the Blueprint.

This is not surprising given the segment of the workforce (emerging; current; or transitional) that each serves. However, many VET (and university) students have not had the opportunity to develop the career management competencies that will assist them to manage the multiple transitions that lie ahead for most. Similarly, as more school students combine schooling and paid work, knowing what employers want is essential.

Australia's public employment service providers are utilising the Employability Skills Framework as a matching tool. An Employability Skills Profiler has been trialled by the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and will soon be available to all Job Network providers. It is designed to better match job seekers to jobs. The Employability Skills Profiler is a joint project with a major commercial job placement agency and the federal department.

With the policy direction agreed by COAG it is time that employability skills and career management skills assume great centrality in all education, training and employment programs and in the development programs of enterprises.

## ***Career Development Services for Workforce Development***

Workforce development is seen as a shared responsibility between individuals, governments and employers. It requires long term, proactive planning and development strategies. Public employment services generally deal with unemployed workers at a point in time. Their services are critical, but can only be one part of a wider workforce development system.

In Australia, the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations purchases employment services through Job Network, a national network of around 200 private, community and government organisations.

Employment services focus on the groups most at risk, that is those that experience difficulty in finding long-term and appropriate employment. Specialist and Intensive Assistance services are made available through another federal government agency, Centrelink, to young people (especially those who do not finish school or progress to further study), indigenous people, mature-age workers, and other groups with special needs, such as parents entering or re-entering the workforce.

Organisations are contracted by the federal department to:

- match job seekers' skills and experiences to job vacancies, canvass employers for jobs, and match and refer suitable job seekers to vacancies.
- provide Job Search Training to improve a job seeker's job search skills and motivation in looking for work and to expand their job search networks.
- provide one-to-one Intensive Assistance and support to help eligible job seekers who have, or are likely to have, difficulty in getting a job.
- assist unemployed people to start their own business through the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and Self Employment Development.

Jobseekers with specific job search needs or few barriers to employment are directed to Job Search Training. Those with a high level of disadvantage are referred to Intensive Assistance, where employment officers have a key role in maintaining the intensity of job search activity and motivating and supporting job seekers (i.e., a stronger counselling role).

Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance providers both offer help with writing resumes; job applications; seeking references; looking for work and interview preparation. In addition, Intensive Assistance participants may also undertake specific skills training in English language, literacy or numeracy or computing, and participate in community or voluntary work in order to improve their employability.

In 1996, a review showed that very few providers of one to one assistance for the unemployed directly include career guidance in their practice, and any elements of testing and follow up counselling was done by individuals with little training in career guidance (Patton, 1996). However, the introduction of the Employability Skills Profiler, widespread use of Australian Career Development Studies (ACDS) programs by those undertaking studies in Certificate IV in Employment Services (CHC40502), and the future application of the professional standards adopted by CICA will bring together career development and employment services for the unemployed.

There are additional challenges in rural and remote areas, for example access to appropriately trained service providers.. The introduction of Careers Advice Australia with its focus on local community partnerships, and ten Regional Industry Career Advisers goes part-way towards addressing this issue for school leavers. A fundamental problem that remains with service provision is the training and qualifications of those delivering the services. The recent adoption and phasing in of Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Professionals (CICA, 2005) is a response to this issue that has been well supported throughout the Australian career development industry.

The provision of an internationally acknowledged national online career information system, myfuture.edu.au, provides a useful nationwide career development resource. However, access is not necessarily available to all as intended. Career development services in Australia are still largely based on a reactive model of service provision for the unemployed and school leavers. Few services are available to those outside these high need groups, and even fewer services are available in rural and remote areas. A fundamental challenge that faces the expansion of career development services is that of cost and "who pays". While a number of fee paying services are available in large metropolitan centres, fewer services are available in rural and remote areas.

Workforce development systems that acknowledge the centrality of career development management competencies, potentially create much needed linkages between disconnected economic development and workforce development activities, particularly at a local level.

### ***Older Workers***

The Australia Government has created a federal portfolio of Ageing to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing Australia. It has produced a National Strategy for an Ageing Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001) which notes that responsibility for addressing the issue is

shared across governments, business and the community and that “public programs should supplement rather than supplant the role of individuals, their families and communities” (p. 2).

Included in the principles guiding the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia are that “all Australians regardless of age, should have access to appropriate employment, training, learning, housing, transport, cultural and recreational opportunities and care services that are appropriate to their diverse needs, to enable them to optimise their quality of life over their entire lifespan” and that “opportunities should exist for Australians to make a lifelong contribution to society and the economy”.

As part of the federal government’s Mature Age Employment and Workplace Strategy, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations manages the Jobwise website that is dedicated to promoting mature age employment. The Strategy seeks to improve the labour force participation of mature age Australians as a key strategy for managing the impact of demographic change. This includes encouraging mature workers to remain in the workforce for longer, or to return to it if they have already left.

In terms of career development service provision, there remains an emphasis on services for young people, particularly those moving from school to work, and subsequent transitions across the lifespan are not well supported (OECD, 2002b). A further potential weakness of the Australian guidance system identified in OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies is the emphasis on a remedial rather than proactive approach to the provision of guidance services for adults (OECD, 2002b). Specifically, the emphasis has been on the provision of services to the unemployed with few services available to assist older Australians in the proactive management of their learning and work in the context of their lives and the transitions they face. However, career development services have the potential to make a worthwhile contribution to the principles of the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia.

### ***The Information Base for Public Policy Making***

The information base for public policy making was identified as an issue for Australia in the Symposium 1999 Australia County Paper and remains an issue to the present time.

There is some evidence of research and evaluation beginning to inform the development of policy and programs. For example, the Career and Transition (CAT) pilots, which sought to explore models of career and transition service provision were recently evaluated. Ongoing improvements to services to over 37,000 young people were made as a result of the action learning methodology (DEST, 2004). A range of other product and service reviews e.g., the Real Game, myfuture.edu.au, and the Jobs Pathways Programme, has informed recommendations on future service provision.

In 2005, a Career Information Products Advisory Group consisting of career development practitioners and consumers was formed by the Department of Education, Science and Training to evaluate new and existing resources developed by the Department. Such collaboration is indicative of a slight shift from supply driven provision of career development resources to demand driven provision.

In 2002, the Review of Career Guidance Policies (OECD, 2002b) observed that there could be a case for an independent body that would have the capacity to provide strategic thinking and innovation in the field and bring together the interests of the profession and the stakeholder groups. More recently a feasibility study was conducted into the establishment of a national institute for leadership for career development and most stakeholders supported the OECD recommendation (The Allen Consulting Group, 2005). The feasibility study identified the provision of “national leadership on career development issues in Australia and to promote delivery of best practice career development services” as the mission for such an institute. At the time of writing, no decision has been made on the establishment of such an institute. It is clear that such a centre with its capacity for monitoring and evaluation would have a role to play in the COAG National Reform Agenda such as ensuring that “information is collected to track youth transitions” (COAG, 2006). A further advantage of such a centre is that it could work in close collaboration with the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy.

An issue that impacts the information base for public policy making is that currently in Australia there is no discrete Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines Classification (RFCD) codes under which career development research may be recorded. Thus career development research is recorded under codes such as education, psychology or counselling, welfare and human services. A discrete code would have the advantage of identifying the extent of career development research undertaken in Australia.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that since Symposium 1999, much has been achieved in the career development industry in Australia. There is evidence of productive and collaborative partnerships between policy makers and practitioners, aided by the development of a united career practitioner voice through CICA. As this paper shows, there is still much to be done, but there is now a firmer foundation on which to build.

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# Austria

**Topics covered:**

Labour supply

Employability skills

Career development services for workforce development

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**I. Theme: Labour Supply**

**II. Theme: Employability Skills**

**III. Excursus: Austrian National Guidance Strategy**

**I. Theme: Labour Supply**

Career Guidance could help to increase labour force participation rates at several levels and in various ways.

**At school:** In Austria exist **three main offers** for guidance and counselling at school.

The **first offer** is a curriculum based subject “Vocational Orientation” especially on the seventh and eight grade. The content is both personality directed and orientated to the world of work. One goal is help for young people to discover their own interests and potentials concerning to further ways of education and career, a second goal is to get real and authentic insight into workplaces in business and companies.

On the ninth grade there exists a unique school type with the core task to prepare young people for successful access to the next phases of education and career, especially to the so called “Dual Education” in a system of apprenticeship training. This school type named “Polytechnic School” combines basic general education, vocational orientation, practical education in various fields of professions and in-company-practice – some weeks during the school year – to get in contact with companies which offer apprenticeship training positions.

The most relevant effect of this school type is a very high rate of successful transition from compulsory school to an access in apprenticeship training.

The **second offer** at school is a system of school counsellors who gives individual guidance and counselling to students. This system exists in all school types at Secondary I and Secondary II level, both general and vocational education. School counsellors give individual information, orientation and Guidance during all phases of school life of students from the age of ten to nineteen. School counsellors are normally teachers and additional part time counsellors with an additional qualification in guidance and counselling.

The **third offer** is a service of school psychologists, which is specialized for special questions in personal development, special needs and diagnostics. The approach of guidance and counselling by psychologists combines the focus on personality of students with orientation for options and pathways in education and career.

This “**three pillar system**” at school - under the responsibility of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture - cooperates with additional offers from other institutions, especially the Labour Market Service with a network of “occupation informations centre”, with social partners both employers and employees institutions and with institutions on regional and national level which offer services for guidance and counselling. One example is the “Career Catching Coach” of the Economic Society who works as a regional networker connecting school and business to help young people to make a successful step from one system to the other without breaks.

Even the unemployed rate of **academic educated people** is much less in relation to the lower educated people the number of alumni’s of the university who are unemployed is increasing. So it is important to give support to students at **tertiary level**.

At all places of **universities** in Austria exist so called “**Career Centres**” with the task to offer services for Guidance, for students at the end of their studies. Some projects are made in cooperation with the Labour Market Service, especially for persons who are unemployed after finishing their studies.

For **young people** – at the end of their first education phase it is very important to get as quick as possible accesses in the next education or career phase without interruption or break.

Breaks at the **first point of transition from school to work** are one of the **most relevant reasons** for **long term unemployment** during the life and social problems for individuals and society on regional, national and transnational level

For **employed people** it is important to have easy access to offers of guidance and counselling for education training and career development. It is a better way to improve, to extent, to complete and to renew own competences and qualifications concerning to the needs and demands of the future from the position as an employee than first to get unemployed, second to learn and train new qualification and third to try to get employed again.

A strategy for career guidance for employed people should try to consider the interests of employees as well as the interests of employers and companies.

A main focus of labour supply is of course **support** and **services** for **unemployed people** to help them to find access to employment as quick as possible, always in connection with services to help to find new orientations to improve competences and qualifications and to develop personal strategies for career development.

In Austria the “Labour Market Service” has the legal mandate for this topic under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, the main task is effective placement of unemployed into job in combination with offers and measures for qualification, training, empowerment and personal orientation, also in cooperation with other institutions for training, education and qualification.

For **special demands** there exist additional offers and measures, e.g. for persons with disabilities, for women returning to the work force migrants also in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs.

Detailed information can be found in the National Report “Career Guidance Policies Austria” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/46/2505725.pdf> and in the Country Note Austria of the OECD.

According to the reference tools for guidance and counselling of the European Commission of the OECD and the CEDEFOP, an Austrian strategy for guidance and counselling for Lifelong Learning was developed, which is focused on strength and weaknesses, described by the OECD, by the Internal Evaluation Reports and the Steering Group for “Life Long Guidance” in Austria.

E.g. **strengths** are:

- ↪ differentiated and various offers for guidance at school, especially the “three pillar system”
- ↪ strong networking between the actors in the field of guidance especially on regional level
- ↪ motivation and enthusiasm of actors in the field of guidance and counselling

**needs for development** e.g.

- ↪ professionalism of actors in the field of guidance and counselling
- ↪ offers for employed people
- ↪ sustainability of guidance measures

### **Open Questions**

- How to integrate all young people after first school education into further training and job

- How to consider the needs of employees with the interests of employers and companies
- How to avoid long term unemployment by use of methods and tools of guidance and counselling

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**Resolution European Council**, May 2004

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**Study on Indicators and Benchmarks** in Career Guidance Austria for CEDEFOP, October 2005

**Transition from Education to the World of Work**, COMENIUS Network 2005

### Theme II: Employability skills

One of the **most important tasks** of the **education** and **career development services** for young people is to help them to **develop own skills, qualification** and **potentials**, to develop employability and career self management skills.

One of the **most relevant criteria** for effectiveness of the education system and career development services concerning to this tasks is, **how transition works between school and world of work** and give chances for access to career pathways, further education and Lifelong Learning.

The Thematic Review of the “**Transition from Initial Education to Working Life**” of the OECD defines essential features of well functioning transition systems – e.g. clearly defined learning pathways and qualification frame works, the provision of a broad range of vocational and technical skills, together with general education and personal skills, a “**youth friendly**” labour market etc. – also pitfalls to be avoided – e.g. large numbers of early school leavers in low skilled work, limited opportunities for young people to combine class room learning with learning outside of the class room, a lack of readily available pathways back into education for school drop outs etc.

Of course it is the main goal of career development for young people – and of the education system in general – to **provide a successful transition from school to world of work** as a basis for a lifelong career and a process of Lifelong Learning.

One of the **first criteria** to measure this topic is the rate of **youth unemployment**.

Austria has one of the **lowest rates of youth unemployment** in the European Union and in OECD Countries (about **7 per cent**). This could be an **indicator** for a **good preparation** of young people, an **effective process of transition from school to work**.

The two **most important reasons** for this situation are first the **structure of the educational system on secondary level two**, especially the aspect that in Austria exists two lines of vocational education at this level, both fulltime vocational school system – especially technical, commercial and human services – and part-time education system – apprenticeship training, and, second, the willingness of entrepreneurs and companies to give young people at the age of fifteen and sixteen a chance to for access to an

apprenticeship training position. The **quote of young people in vocational education** at the level of **secondary two** (ISCED 3) is about **eighty percent**, one of the highest in the European Union.

There are some **additional features** in the Austrian education system which provide the process of transition between school to work. One feature is a **good preparation** in preliminary school types, especially in the **secondary school “Hauptschule”** and in the ninth grade school type **“Polytechnical School”**. This one year school type has his **main focus** to prepare young people for the **step into the following apprenticeship training** with **orientation, vocational preparation** and **occupational basic training** in the chosen field of professions. This school type is very successful to help young people to **get access to an apprenticeship training position**, also for young people with less educational conditions.

For young people with **disabilities** and **special needs** exists since 2004 the offer of a special kind of vocational training (“Integrative Berufsausbildung”), a legally based kind of training with official certificate in defined fields of professions.

Of course there exist in Austria a lot of **open questions** concerning the transition of young people from school to work, e.g.

- ↪ How could we **reach young people who leave the school** and are not successful to reach an apprenticeship training position (the quote of persons is not very high, but relevant)?
- ↪ How can we assure that young people get education and training in a **field of their interests and potentials**?
- ↪ How can we assure a transition process as a successful **basis for a lifelong career** and Lifelong Learning process in a very flexible and changing world of work, especially for persons with **lower education and qualification**?

In relationship of measures to improve employability skills for young people and for adults it is the more effective the earlier we try to develop employability skills.

The priorities for employability skills programs for adult people should be to anticipate changes and brakes on work places in companies and in professions to intervene in time in qualification needs and demands.

For those people who get unemployed it is necessary to offer active programs and offers for orientation, activation and improvement of qualification and skills.

## Sources

**Thematic Review** “Transition from Initial education to the World of Work”, OECD 2000

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**Study on Indicators and Benchmarks** in Career Guidance Austria for CEDEFOP, October 2005

**Transition from Education to the World of Work**, COMENIUS Network 2005

**Information, Counselling, Orientation** for Education and Profession, Analysis bmbwk 2006

## **Theme III Excursus: Austrian National Guidance Strategy**

The Austrian strategy for improving the system of lifelong guidance is based on **A holistic View of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance** "Information, Counselling, Orientation for Education and Profession development of a national strategy Austria.

### **Basics and starting positions**

- ↵ Career Guidance Policy Review, OECD 2003
- ↵ Resolutions Council of the European Union, May 2004
- ↵ EU Handbook for Policy Makers, December 2004
- ↵ National and international documents

### **Main topics**

- ↵ Improvement of coordination of offers and development of a strategy for information, counselling and guidance for education and profession.
- ↵ Close links to the strategy for Lifelong Learning.
- ↵ Contribution to reach the Lisbon goals.

### **Steps**

- ↵ Instalment of a working group in the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.
- ↵ Broadening the platform with additional partners, from the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, Labour Market Service, Chamber of Economics, Chamber of Employees, Federation of Austrian Industry, Euroguidance, Economic Society.
- ↵ Development of a common strategy.

### **Analyses and Studies**

- ↵ Overview above regulations by law in the field of guidance and counselling in Austria – basics of values and goals in Austrian constitution and law.
- ↵ Collection and analyses of initiatives and project concerning the fields of politics as described in the guidance resolutions of the European Union and the proposals of the Country Note of the OECD. (more than hundred initiatives and projects are analysed and documented).

### **Paper of the Social Partners**

Guidelines and demands in the field of guidance and counselling for education and profession are described in a paper (work in progress) by the chamber of commerce, Federation of Austrian Industry, Chamber of employees and the Austrian Trade Union.

### **Main tasks for the Development of a Strategy**

#### **Meta goals**

- ↵ Orientation on the demands of the citizens
- ↵ Improvement of the basic competences for planning the own educational and vocational development.
- ↵ Open and easy access to services for lifelong guidance.
- ↵ Connecting lifelong guidance with strategies for lifelong learning

## **Programmatic goals**

- ↪ Implementation of basic competences in all curricula.
- ↪ Focus on process orientation and coaching.
- ↪ Professionalism of counsellors and trainers.
- ↪ Quality assurance and evaluation of offers, measures, processes and structures of guidance and counselling.
- ↪ Widening the access – offers for new target groups

## **Meetings, Conferences, Dates**

In the year of the European Union presidency of Austria a lot of conferences, meetings and workshops with the topic on guidance and counselling – national and transnational – takes place.

According to the interest of the next presidency of Finland, Austria prepares some contents and concepts for discussion and development.

The European Joint Actions project “European Guidance Forum” – coordinated by the Austrian partner (Economic Society) develops concepts and proposals to improve national and transnational network and platforms for guidance and counselling in Europe, based on the reference tools of the European Union, the CEDEFOP, the OECD and the ICCDPP.

10. März 2006

Heidrun Strohmeyer / Gerhard Krötzl / Peter Härtel  
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# Botswana

**Topics covered:**

Human capital  
Employability skills  
Older workers

**Prepared by:**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
BAC	Botswana Accountancy College
BCSPA	Botswana Civil Service Pensioners Association
BIDPA	Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance & Open Learning
BOTA	Botswana Training Authority
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IDM	Institute for Development Management
IFSC	International Financial Services Centre
NDP	National Development Plan
RNPE	Revised National Policy on Education
TEC	Tertiary Education Council
UB	University of Botswana

## **BACKGROUND**

Botswana is a landlocked semi arid country at the centre of Southern Africa sharing boundaries with Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It covers a land area of approximately 582 000 km<sup>2</sup>, most of which is covered by the Kalahari Desert. The population was enumerated at 1,680,863 during the 2001 population census, with an average annual growth rate of about 2.4%. The country has a youthful population structure with a mean age of 24.5. The age below 15 years constitutes about 36.7%, while those between 15 and 64 constitute about 58.3% of the total population. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has however impacted the nation reversing the achievements and decreasing overall life expectancy from 65.3 in 1991 to 55.7 in 2001. This has affected mostly the economically active age group of 15-49 who have an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 29.8% while the prevalence rate among pregnant women and men with sexually transmitted diseases stood at 38.8% in 2001. The National Development Plan (NDP) 9 (2003) observed that HIV/AIDS posed the greatest threat and was likely to shift the workforce to a slightly younger generation by about three years. This has serious implications for career development. Setswana and English are the official languages, with English being the most used as the language of government and business transactions.

## **THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The education system in Botswana consists of seven (7) years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, two years of senior secondary education and an average of four years at tertiary education depending on programme of study and/or institution.

This means that there is 10 years basic education (primary and junior secondary) education. Basic education is accessible to all children at no fee in primary schools; however, one needs to note that it is not compulsory even though 98% of children have access to basic education. Entry into senior secondary is through successful performance at junior level, and availability of places at senior schools. Education at this level has been free for many years now, but on government's introduction of cost sharing in January 2006, a minimal amount at secondary school is expected from parents. At the end of two years of senior school, depending on the student's performance, and the economic needs of the country, government will then sponsor the students for tertiary education by awarding a grant or loan. According to the Revised National Policy on Education (1994), the ultimate goal of education is to prepare the country for a transition from a traditional agro-based economy to an industrial economy and therefore the education system aims to drive national development.

## **CAREER GUIDANCE IN BOTSWANA**

Career guidance in Botswana is mainly implemented within the school system as part of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme. There are teachers trained in guidance and counselling whose mandate is to provide career and psychological counselling to students in addition to their role as subject teachers. Unfortunately the schools are not well resourced to adequately provide

career guidance to students and that leaves a lot of our people with limited or no knowledge of their career options. Botswana does not have career counsellors in private practice and career resource centres where everyone who needs career guidance can go to for assistance.

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN BOTSWANA**

This section will attempt to respond to the issues raised by Symposium 2006 and will discuss the link between career development and workforce development. It will address three themes namely human development, older workers and employability skills.

### **HUMAN CAPITAL**

Human capital refers to skilled workforce. Human capital as Lipsey (1989) puts it is “the stock of acquired skills by individual workers” (p.308). Johnson (2005) describes human capital as “The practical knowledge, acquired skills and learned abilities of an individual that make him/her potentially productive and thus equip him/her to earn income in exchange for labour. Lipsey (1989) further argues that human capital is acquired through two main channels of formal education and in-service training. In Botswana human capital is largely developed by government with limited parastatal organisations and private sector participation. Workforce development is thus a shared responsibility between the Government who is the main contributor, and stakeholders including parastatals, private sector and individuals.

The role of stakeholders in the provision of career development services cannot be overemphasised. Government as the major administrator is expected to take a leading role in developing the current and future workforce. Government is therefore expected to bring together stakeholders and encourage them to take on their responsibility of developing human capital. It is also important for all parties to work together and come up with collaborative strategies at local, regional and national levels to avoid dependency, duplication and ensure that the country has the right pool to meet its economic and labour needs. Currently in Botswana there is limited collaboration of stakeholders in the development of human capital. Government expects social partners to help in the development of human capital and because there is no legislation or policy that compels them to do so or any monitoring system in place, some of them have relaxed and are waiting for government to take up the role alone. The following strategies are crucial to have career development as an integral part of the workforce development, policies and programmes:

- a) Set up task forces to serve as an advisory body to training institutions in terms of the skills required by the labour market and the labour market trends. The task force would also serve as a link for institutions with the labour market so that experiential education is a success. The task force can also determine the needs of stakeholders and human resources and lobby the legislators for their realisation. Working together will remove competition between stakeholders and encourage teamwork. The task force will also advise on legislation and policies in terms of skills acquisition.
- b) Research can help a lot in areas that stakeholders need more information from. This can allow stakeholders to share information on any area of research they have done that can help in the improvement of productivity and better ways of satisfying the needs of the businesses and workers. Research can guide labour market trends, student's guide to higher education and further education/training, occupation handbook that explains details on occupations/jobs found in the country, software programs that guide individuals on what careers they can do and many more.
- c) Career resource centres to provide information in terms of the labour market trends, training institutions, preparing for interviews, writing cover letters and curriculum vitae's and other career related information. A feasibility study that was carried out in 1998 recommended the establishment of career resource centres to “provide career resources and materials as well as career counselling and psychological services” during the National Development Plan 8. To date, this has not materialised. Career resource centres will also provide an opportunity for career counsellors to practice outside the school system and serve the society at large.
- d) A Training fund should be established by all stakeholders to develop or strengthen career development services. These could be through the introduction of a training levy by all stakeholders, which would be used to develop human capital to drive the economy.

- e) Forum for consultation can be formed to enable the stakeholders to give each other feedback on other collaborative strategies in place. This forum can also serve as a monitoring body to ensure workforce development, policies and programmes are well developed and implemented.

Career practitioners, employers and policy developers have a major role in ensuring that the strategies expounded above are realised and implemented. Career practitioners are expected to use information gathered through the task force to benefit clients in their career development. They are also expected to participate in generation of such information so that they are up-to-date with changes and new developments as career information becomes obsolete from time to time. Career practitioners will not only use the career resource centres to provide career guidance and counselling to clients, but help in their establishment and directorship. The career counsellors play a major role in the training fund and consultation forum by sharing their ideas on how they should be utilised based on the needs of the clients they serve and help give information on their usefulness to clients. Employers like career practitioners should participate in the generation of career information through task forces, research and career resource centres. Employers' participation in the training fund will ensure it sponsors their needs in the labour market and thus increase human resources productivity. Their participation in the consultation forum will also provide an opportunity for them to get rid of any obstacles in creating a workforce that will meet their needs. Policy makers have a great opportunity to benefit from this arrangement. Their role will be to develop policies to guide the collaboration and ensure implementation. Career practitioners, employers and policy makers have a shared responsibility.

Education plays a critical role in developing human capital of the future. Education lays a foundation upon which future Employability Skills could be developed. It is imperative that employers and individuals needs are clearly articulated at the time of first employment so that both parties can know each other's expectation and needs, and the degree to which they can meet them. It is also advisable that on a periodic basis, the two parties meet to review the extent to which they have met each other's needs and expectations and continue to review their needs.

## **OLDER WORKERS**

According to the Public Service Act that was amended in 2000, an employee is allowed to retire at any age. However, the optional retirement age within the public sector is 45 years while the mandatory retirement age for both men and women is 60. (Public Service Act Section 15, sub-section 1). This is in exception of Judges whose mandatory retirement age is 70 years. (Constitution of Botswana Section 97 sub-section 1). Beyond this age, a pensioner/retiree may be considered for employment on contract. This is generally the guiding principle even for private sector employers. Within this context therefore an older worker may be defined as anyone who is within five years of early retirement but before mandatory retirement or a retiree on contract employment. According to a study on Employment and Manpower conducted by BIDPA (2001), the general trend in Botswana is that people leave employment when forced to do so and therefore do not adequately plan for retirement. This is depictive of the state of individual preparation in terms of career development. The study further observes that Botswana are not enlightened on career development.

The government should play a key role in providing a conducive platform for the government and the social and development partners to come up with policies that emphasise mandatory retirement planning. Having legislature in place as a major collaborative strategy, could enable formation of organized structures that will look at in-service training, voluntary work and mentoring of younger workers by older workers. An example of this in Botswana was in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, when the Nurses Association, which has many retired nurses as members, played a major role in home based care training and implementation. This is a good example of how the skills of older workers may be harnessed.

Although the government has realised through the experience of some Asian countries that the human resource of any nation can be its sole economic pillar (Annual Economic Report, 2000) it still leaves a lot to be desired in retaining the skills of older workers. The complementary roles of career practitioners, employers and policy developers in retention of older workers in the workforce therefore include:

**Legislation and Policies on older workers and retirees** - policy makers should come up with legislature to support active aging and retention of older workers. This will ensure that older workers do not become government's sole burden in terms of support. The policy should set structures that allow employers to implement this with standards and monitoring mechanisms in place;

**Education and Psychological support on the life long career development processes** - There is need to have structures that allow career practitioners to offer education and psychological support not only to the younger employees but older ones as well. Education and training should allow for broad skill development to allow older workers to adjust to new situations;

**A holistic approach to the health of older workers** - The employment services should address not only the career development of older workers but employ an approach that looks at all the aspects of their health, mental, physical and spiritual;

**Mentoring Programmes set for younger employees by employers** - The government and private employers should use older workers as mentors for younger employees. It would be beneficial to have long term plans for career development for all employees, including post-retirement, because older workers do not cease to have skills at retirement. Employers must be encouraged to create some link of database for retired personnel with their skills and contact details;

**Provision of career development services** – these should be established throughout the country to also target older workers. Career guidance practitioners should volunteer their services in associations such as the Botswana Civil Service Pensioners Association (BCSPA) to help the members with strategies that promote active aging. There is need for coordinated efforts to address the career development of all older workers, irrespective of their employment history. Career development practitioners should lobby politicians and advocate for the needs of older workers.

## **EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

Employability skills can be defined as those generic skills, attitudes and behaviors that enhance a person's chance of employment. In other words, these are skills that employers look for in their employees and include:

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Interpersonal relations
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Decision-making
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Personal management skills

In Botswana, career development services help to develop employability and career self-management skills in young people. This is done through various approaches including the following:

**The comprehensive guidance and counseling programme** offered as an integral part of the education system has strong career guidance component that aims at assisting students to prepare for the world of work. (*Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of Guidance & Counseling in Botswana Education System, 1996*). The emphasis of career guidance is on awareness but facilitates exploration to encourage development of knowledge, skills and attitude. For example: career fairs at all levels of education create awareness on career opportunities while projects and initiatives such as job shadowing, *Take-a-child-to-Work* and, *Discovering Her Future* (an initiative that promotes female participation in science-based careers) encourage further exploration to facilitate informed decision-making. These target mostly young people in schools;

**Programmes that target out-of-school youth** and young adults who graduate from tertiary institutions though few play a significant role. Examples include the Mabogo Dinku Advice Centre, which is a community –based organization that provides a range of information and social services

to out-of-school and at-risk youth. Another example is the private-sector initiative coordinated by the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) to expose young people to careers within the financial sector.

There are a number of policy, program, organizational and delivery barriers that affect provision of effective career guidance services to young people and these include:

- a) Absence of a national policy on career development. although there is an educational policy that guides implementation of guidance and counseling, its focus is on primary and secondary schools
- b) Private sector contribution is insignificant thus career guidance services dependent on government initiative. Employers do not seem to recognize the value of career guidance
- c) No formal structures to encourage and nurture private sector contribution to career development. For example incentives such as a tax rebate.
- d) Lack of trained personnel

There are also challenges experienced in developing and enhancing employability skills among adults and young people. It is generally assumed that young people are easy to reach through the education system while adults are already in employment and therefore do not need to be targeted. These assumptions can be misleading.

Challenges faced in developing and enhancing employability skills in young people:

- o Career guidance is not necessarily regarded as priority even within the education system. This is because in schools a lot of emphasis is placed on examinable subjects but guidance is not examinable such that both teachers and students pay lip service to it
- o There are very few people trained in provision of career guidance services and it is often even erroneously assumed that anyone can provide the services. Where such personnel exist they tend to be overwhelmed by the case load and multiple roles
- o There is no policy direction on out-of-school youth and organizations that target this population have no obligation to provide such services. BOCODOL provides opportunity for school leavers and/or drop-outs to continue with their secondary schooling and or upgrade in order to improve their results. This is meant to enable access to higher learning or facilitate re-entry to conventional education system. Career guidance is offered as part of the learner support services mainly through pre-enrolment counseling and goal setting and entails provision of information and/or referral to other providers. The Department of Non formal Education also offers skills development as part of the literacy programme.

Challenges faced in developing and enhancing employability skills among adults:

- o Access to training, retraining and re-skilling. Although opportunities might be there, funding is often difficult to source
- o Employers are not compelled to have provision for career development including training plan, policy or budget. Few employers especially in private sector even have staff development programmes. Where it exists it is meant to enable employees to do the job better rather than for personal development of the individual
- o No provision of public employment services and career guidance for adults. Private employment agencies focus on job search and head hunting, which serve the interest of the employers rather than the adult
- o The labour organizations and trade unions do not seem to view this as essential

The following are suggested priorities for targeting adults:

- a) Ensure that career guidance is an integral part of adult learning programmes in both public and private institutions e.g. IDM, BAC etc. This should include even work-based training. One way of doing this is by ensuring that provision of career guidance is set as a criteria for registration and accreditation by regulatory bodies such as BOTA and TEC
- b) Strategies for re-skilling of adults including older workers and retirees to keep up with the dynamic nature of the labour market and new technologies

- c) Promote and encourage mentoring for skills sharing. This will not only assist younger employees to gain essential skills and experience but it will also enhance employer confidence (in younger employees) and offer professional stimulation (for older workers)
- d) Education and awareness on the role of career guidance
- e) Encourage private sector to employ career counselors to provide career development to their employees

## CONCLUSION

Human capital is a very important resource for any country and therefore cannot be left to chance. Career development and human capital development is a shared responsibility that all stakeholders need to take seriously if they want to see this country compete in the global economy. Providing career guidance to older workers would lead to a lot of them successfully planning for retirement and giving way to young and stronger workers in time. An informed and empowered older worker can continue to contribute to the development of the economy even in retirement. Employability skills are critical in today's competitive global economy. Any country that wants to compete successfully in the global market should ensure that all of its able bodied men and women have employability skills that can carry it through. Employability skills should not be the sole responsibility of Government but a shared responsibility between Government and stakeholders. According to, *A long Term Vision for Botswana* (1997); by 2016 "Botswana will have reached full employment, where the total number of jobs available in the formal or informal sectors is in balance with the number of job seekers" (pg. 7). The Vision further aspires for an educated and informed nation that "will produce entrepreneurs who will create employment through the establishment of new enterprises" (pg. 5). For this to become a reality, the government needs to come up with comprehensive career development and workforce development policies and strategies that promote life long learning.

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## **APPENDIX 1 - Profiles of Team members**

**Miriam Banana Maroba** works for the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) as Manager for Learner Support responsible for the delivery of quality, cost effective programmes and activities to facilitate learner progression and promote a culture of lifelong learning. Before joining BOCODOL, she worked as a Senior Education Officer in the Guidance and Counseling Division within the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation in the Ministry of Education from 1995-2001 and was mostly responsible for coordination of career guidance services. She has also worked as a school counselor between 1989 and 1995. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Humanities) and Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) from the University of Botswana as well as a Masters in Education (Counseling) from Acadia University in Canada. She is a practicing Counselor and author who continues to contribute significantly to the development of Guidance and Counseling in Botswana.

**Hildah Lorato Mokgolodi** is an employee of the Guidance and Counselling Division of the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation of the Ministry of Education. She currently holds the position of Principal Education Officer II and is responsible for the overall coordination of national guidance programmes in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. She holds a Bachelor of Guidance and Counselling from the University of North West, South Africa and a Master of Education in Counselling and Human Services from the University of Botswana. She has authored several books on Guidance and Counselling and has presented several papers on the area in the country and internationally.

**Christopher Tidimane** works for the University of Botswana as a career counsellor. In addition to providing career counselling to the University of Botswana community, he is also a researcher and author. Mr Tidimane has worked for the Ministry of education in Botswana as an education officer (Guidance) and senior education (Guidance), performing various duties that involved policy making, career guidance and implementation of the Guidance & Counselling Programme in primary through secondary. Mr Tidimane has also had an opportunity to talk to employers about the possibility of employing University of Botswana graduates. He has a master's degree in Counsellor Education, with Clemson University in the USA.



# Canada

## **Topics covered:**

Human capital  
Career development services for workforce development  
The information base for public policy making

## **Prepared by:**

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*The writer is enormously indebted to the Canada Team and the pan-Canadian Symposium network for their input. Members of the Canada Team are listed in Appendix A.*

*It is not possible to capture all the initiatives in all provinces and territories that advance the connections between career development and workforce development. We have attempted to select a representative cross section of examples which illustrate both the progress being made on a pan-Canadian level and the ongoing challenges. We hope this paper will situate career development as a strategic contributor to workforce development in Canada as well as contribute to the dialogue at the Australia Symposium.*

## **Introduction**

The OECD Country Note on Canada was published in September, 2002. The Note commended Canada on some of its career development strengths including labour market information (LMI), creative resources, public-private partnerships, third-sector initiatives, and strategic instruments on which to build professional practice (e.g. Blueprint for LifeWork Designs; Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners). Among areas identified for improvement were the lack of a coherent framework for services within the educational system, the absence of a proactive developmental model which would provide services to all Canadians including assistance to make effective use of LMI, and lack of strategic leadership to coordinate the breadth of career development provision.

In response to the release of the OECD Report and the recommendations from earlier International Symposia on Career Development and Public Policy, Canada hosted (HRSDC funded; CCDF organized) a pan-Canadian Symposium (“*Working Connections*”, November, 2003). This Symposium provided an opportunity for key stakeholder groups from all provinces/territories to develop strategies to address the OECD observations as well as issues that had been identified in pre-Symposium papers submitted by provincial/territorial teams in advance of the Symposium.

All provincial/territorial Symposium teams committed to 3-year action plans following the Symposium to try to advance specific priority career development issues and also to work toward a follow-up pan-Canadian Symposium to continue the collaboration among stakeholders, facilitate knowledge exchange, and study and evaluate progress.

A feature of “*Working Connections*” that is relevant to the theme of “*Shaping the Future*” was the structure of provincial/territorial teams. Ideally each team was to consist of equal numbers of policy makers, career development leaders and employer and labour representatives. It proved difficult to bring employer and labour representatives to the table. It became clear that the connections between the career development community and industry/business/labour were not well established and that employers did not readily identify the career development agenda as relevant or helpful to them. Furthermore, career practitioners did not rate the priority issues facing employers as high priorities for their practice. Bridging the gap between career development and workforce development was identified as a priority issue in Canada and work has been underway on several levels to begin to build stronger and mutually beneficial connections. The theme of the Australia Symposium is therefore highly relevant for Canada.

Our goal has been to produce, in consultation with the pan-Canadian Symposium network, a paper which will be a contribution to the Australian proceedings and at the same time advance the Symposium work underway in Canada. We have chosen to focus on the three themes of Human Capital; Career Development Services for Workforce Development and The Information Base for Public Policy Making. We will link the issues from “*Working Connections*” to these themes as appropriate. The paper will also touch briefly on Professionalization of Career Development Practice as this is an overarching issue for the progress of career development in Canada.

## **The Labour Market Context**

Each province/territory in Canada has unique labour market issues and challenges. However, the following are common across all:

- Emerging skill shortages: 66% of employers report having difficulty filling positions with qualified workers (Manpower Inc., 2006);

- Skilled trades shortages across all sectors: 1 million skilled trade shortages are predicted in the next 15 years (Manpower Inc., 2006);
- The knowledge economy is leaving many workers behind: It is estimated that at least 2 million Canadian workers are working poor, making less than \$10.00 per hour (CPRN, 2004);
- High drop-out rates: The drop-out rate from secondary school is improving (11% average) but continues to be unacceptably high in some provinces and in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2002); it is estimated that only 7% of jobs will be open to non-secondary school graduates (Knowledge Matters, 2001);
- Lack of WorkLife Balance in workplaces and families: In a study of 10,000 workers, 2/3 reported worklife balance issues and 40% reported stress in workplaces as a high contributing factor to lack of balance (Voices of Canadians, Duxbury and Higgins, 2004);
- Ensuring skills recognition through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) as well as promoting equitable access to skills development. (Natcon presentation on Workplace Skills Strategy (2006, Karen Jackson, ADM, HRSDC).

Each of these challenges is a workforce development challenge, a policy challenge, a business/industry/employer challenge and a career development challenge. Career development research and practice must be actively contributing to labour market issues and solutions in order to build and sustain connections between career development and workforce development.

#### **Themes 1 & 4: Human Capital and Career Development Services for Workforce Development**

We have elected to address Human Capital and Career Development Services for Workforce Development as a single issue but to approach it from two perspectives. The first perspective is the policy perspective, exploring the policy connections between career development, human capital and workforce development. The second perspective examines the mechanisms for collaboration amongst the several stakeholders to support closer connectivity.

For the Policy perspective, we pose the following questions:

- A) In Canada, to what extent is career development recognized as an important contributor to developing human capital and integrated into workforce development policies, programs and strategies in the educational and training system, in workplaces and in support services to workers and learners in transition?
- B) What are the major obstacles/challenges to integration and collaboration which were identified at “Working Connections” and what strategies/good practices are underway in response to these challenges?
- C) What challenges/obstacles still are ahead?

#### **A) Recognition of Career Development in Policy**

While there is variation at provincial/territorial levels, overall Canada invests heavily in career and labour market information for all citizens and in employment services for the unemployed. The role of LMI is recognized in policy. There is increased emphasis and investment in career education and career development in the K-12 education sector. The role of career development is becoming somewhat better recognized and integrated. An estimated 55% of career practitioners are in the community-based sector providing career and employment services to a broad range of client groups, including immigrant settlement as well as services for individuals with specialized needs. This has been the traditional arena for policy recognition of career development with respect to reconnecting people to learning, training and work. In terms of the employed workforce, (workers manoeuvring their career paths, workers re-entering the workforce, workers in transition between careers or jobs, the underemployed, the working poor), services are very fragmented.

We do not yet have an identifiable career development culture in Canada. We have “pockets” with events such as Canada Career Week but these are mainly targeted to students. It is often the case that government strategy documents will describe the importance of career development outcomes (e.g. changes in situation such as finding employment, applying for further training or education, learning to search for career and labour market information; learning to identify employment and education opportunities) but will not identify career development programs and services as a necessary delivery mechanism to achieve these outcomes. The career development community continues to have to work hard to be “visible” and to be recognized in policy circles for contributing added value.

## **B) Major Identified Challenges and Examples of Current Strategies**

Four major challenges were identified at “*Working Connections*” with respect to positioning career development as a key contributor to human capital and workforce development:

1. A comprehensive vision for a coherent delivery system does not exist and needs to be articulated;
2. There is no consistent access to career development services for Canadians in any jurisdiction (K-12, Post-secondary, employed, unemployed);
3. No complete profile of service provision and service providers in all provinces/territories exists;
4. Until career development is more aligned with policy issues and connected to the productivity of the working population as a whole, rather than mainly to those in crisis or deficit skill positions, it will continue to be seen as a fringe policy instrument rather than a central instrument.

### ***Challenge 1: A comprehensive vision for a coherent delivery system***

Prior to the 2003 Symposium, only the Northwest Territories (NWT) had a single career development policy which addressed the career needs of all citizens across the lifespan. Since 2003, other provinces have moved towards developing inter-departmental and/or inter-service career development policy frameworks. It is interesting to note that each initiative inextricably links the creation of a career culture with the influencing of public policy. These collaborative cross-department developments are substantial movements forward. Three examples follow:

#### **Example 1: Province of Alberta**

Alberta has explicitly adopted an all age approach to access to career development services in metropolitan, rural and remote communities. Three distinct ministries, Human Resources and Employment, Advanced Education and Education are co-leading The Career Development Strategy: Learner Pathways to:

create the environment and culture for Albertans to acquire career management skills and to maximize individual potential;

- set the strategic direction and policy for career development; and
- define the roles and responsibilities of each ministry.

A companion Labour Force Development Strategy is co-led by Human Resources and Employment and Advanced Education. Its focus is on addressing Alberta’s current labour force pressures which include severe skill shortages as well as building capacity to respond to future learning needs.

These two strategies are cross government initiatives that are engaging business and industry and other community stakeholders.

(See link to the public consultation on the Building and Educating Tomorrows Workforce. <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/consultation/> )

#### **Example 2: Province of Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment are two provincial Departments that are focusing on how best to deliver career development services in the K-12 school system, post-secondary education and training, apprenticeship, public library systems, public career and employment services, and to new immigrants. There is an emphasis on approaching this challenge in

a holistic and comprehensive manner and considerable work has already been done to build a strong base of knowledge for ongoing dialogue with many stakeholders. Several foundation pieces have been implemented to create a coherent delivery system including adopting the Blueprint for LifeWork Designs as a framework for K-12 career development curriculum integration, Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners for use by practitioners in Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services Centers, and approval of the Recognition of Prior Learning Provincial framework. Further work is planned in strengthening accountability and developing a continuous improvement framework.

### **Example 3: Province of Manitoba**

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (ECY) is making Career Development a departmental priority in curriculum and in youth programs. ECY is working with Manitoba Advanced Education and Training (AET) to develop a Career Development Framework that integrates the Blueprint for Life/work Designs and the Essential Skills. AET will also encourage employers to incorporate career management within the workplace and provide appropriate financial support to increase access for low-income persons and families to post-secondary education.

The Career Development goals for ECY and AET are:

- Career Development is recognized as essential to the social and economic well-being of Manitobans;
- Manitobans have the knowledge and the abilities to set and achieve career goals;
- Manitobans have access to quality resources required to make informed education, training and employment choices on an ongoing basis;
- Manitobans have the employability skills and attitudes to work and adapt effectively to the needs of the workplace, and
- Stakeholders in career development have a forum to exchange information and work cooperatively.

### **Challenge 2: Universal Access for Citizens across the Lifespan**

There is no consistent access to career development services for Canadians in any jurisdiction (K-12, Post-secondary, employed, unemployed). There is considerable variation in range and quality of services provided within and across jurisdictions and services have been described as “hit-or-miss”. A notable exception to this observation is the provision of labour-market information (LMI). LMI tends to be readily available and accessible to virtually anyone in Canada. The OECD Study cited LMI as one of the strengths of the Canadian career development delivery system.

The “universal” LMI service is however mostly restricted to access to self-service labour market information, with well-developed career information and instructional websites. One of the OECD suggestions to Canada was to explore all age Career Development Centres at the community level which would provide comprehensive information on learning and work opportunities, with appropriate professional staff for support as needed. There are examples of this type of provision beginning.

### **Example 1: Service Canada**

A single Government of Canada service delivery network called Service Canada was launched in fall, 2005 providing universal access to career and labour market information and a comprehensive range of self-help internet tools and resources to assist with individual career development

Labour Market Information (LMI) Service Delivery Standards have been developed and a comprehensive in-service training program for Career Information Specialists has been recently developed for Service Canada staff. Service Canada is in very early stages but these are promising signs that tools to enhance the quality and support for universal access are being developed.

Service Canada is a one-stop for all government services and so there is a risk that the provision of information on all services will obscure the opportunity to provide an enhanced level of LMI service.

## **Example 2: Province of Alberta**

Government of Alberta Labour Market Information Centres are located in over 40 urban and rural service centres across the province. Labour Market Information Centres provide guided assistance by career consultants to labour market information, and career and employment programs and services. Career and employment services are available by telephoning a Career Information Hotline where career consultants are available.

### ***Challenge 3: Incomplete picture of career development service provision and service providers in all provinces/territories***

In order for the career development sector to progress, a more explicit mapping is needed to benchmark human resources, training capacity, regulatory issues, policy-practice interface, and other foundational issues. This is a major shortcoming. At “*Working Connections*”, employer representatives requested an inventory of career providers and services. They indicated that the career development community is quite hidden and difficult to access for practical supports for their workplace learning and development strategies.

Efforts have been underway by the Steering Committee for the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners for several years to secure funding to complete a comprehensive mapping of the career development community across Canada. To date, these efforts have been unsuccessful. In the absence of a pan-Canadian picture, individual provinces are beginning to scope the field provincially.

### **Example 1: Province of Saskatchewan Sector Study**

In Saskatchewan, a comprehensive mapping of the sector within the province is currently underway, to be completed in summer, 2006. The study will address human resource issues, training and professional development issues and the perceived need for a provincial career development leadership organization. The data gathering instruments developed for this study have the potential to be used across the country and there is considerable will and commitment across the sector to find a way to complete the mapping on a national scale.

### **Example 2: Stakeholder Liaison Advisory Council (SLAC) of the Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs)**

The Stakeholder Liaison Advisory Council (SLAC) of the Canadian Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) is a representative pan-Canadian group of leaders of career development organizations through whom the Steering Committee for the S&Gs connects with the Canadian career development community. The SLAC has met at strategic times throughout the four phases of the S&Gs initiative. In January, 2006, the SLAC unanimously endorsed a motion to conduct background research and delineate and evaluate possible options for creating a national body (association, organization, coalition) to create and manage a “roadmap” for organizing and bringing increased coherence, inclusion and recognition into the career development community. A mapping of the field will be an essential ingredient in the research.

### ***Challenge 4: Career Development in Workplaces for the Employed Adult***

The OECD Study observed that in all countries studied, employed adults, especially those in small to medium sized organizations, had limited if any access to career development services. The body of research on career development in workplaces is not large but it does suggest that the “engagement” of the worker in work tasks which make best use of his/her skills is a key piece which is often missing. It is this skills connection which taps an individual’s energy and motivation and contributes to engagement in learning and skills development (CPI, UK, 2004). Career development may be one of the most sustainable levers for worker engagement. Very limited Canadian research has been done on the amount, nature or impact of career development in workplaces and limited use has been made of career development programs and services as a strategic contributor to worker engagement. Two major federal government initiatives are underway which may provide vehicles to significantly strengthen career development in workplaces.

### **Example 1: Workplace Skills Strategy**

The Government's Workplace Skills Strategy is intended to build a labour market that is flexible and efficient; to help Canadians be among the best trained, most highly skilled workers in the world and respond to the needs of employers to make Canadian workplaces more productive and innovative.

To advance these objectives, the Workplace Skills Strategy is a long-term strategy. Phase I focuses on three priority areas for action:

- Workplace Skills Initiative: support for testing new approaches to skills development, encourage employers to invest in the skills development of their employees, and inform labour market policy and programming;
- Workplace Partners Panel: create an arm's-length body comprising leaders from business and labour that will help enhance awareness of the impact of investing in skills in the workplace;
- Trades and Apprenticeship Strategy: focus national attention on the challenges skilled trades are facing.

Phase II of the WSS will involve a new generation of initiatives and instruments designed to foster workplace skills development.

While this initiative does not explicitly highlight the role of career development in fostering workplace skills development, there is an opportunity for the links to be made and the possibility for research and demonstration projects under the WSI umbrella.

### **Example 2: Work and Learning Knowledge Centre (WLKC)**

The Canadian Government created the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) in 2004 as an independent organization devoted to lifelong learning. The CCL has established five Knowledge Centres, one being the Work and Learning Knowledge Centre as a vehicle to move work-related learning to the front rank of policy and workplace practices. WLKC's membership is made up of approximately 100 organizations, including business, organized labour, education private training providers, sector councils, research groups, career development organizations and other groups involved in labour market issues.

The work of the WLKC is to demonstrate how work-related learning can address issues of productivity, competitiveness or skills shortages and to show how it can enable individual learners to improve their skills and knowledge, support their career development, labour market mobility and employment security. The WLKC seeks to provide access to practical knowledge for practitioners and policy makers.

The career development community is at the WLKC table of stakeholders and work-related learning is explicitly identified as a strategic contributor to the career development of employed adults.

### **C) Challenges/Obstacles still ahead**

The above provide some examples of promising developments to address these challenges in the Canadian context. There are many challenges yet to be addressed in order to position career development as a major contributor to human capital and workforce development. Among these:

- Overall access and engagement of students in K-12 in career development is weak. According to Statistics Canada (2004), an average of only 29% of students reported taking part in career planning courses; 47% had taken part in work experience; only 21% recalled receiving career and labour market information; 14% indicated having had assistance in managing such information;
- The OECD Country Note recommended a study of provision of career development services in the Post-Secondary education (PSE) sector. This has not been actioned. Research at the University of Lethbridge suggests that only 24% of students in Arts and Science report feeling ready to enter the workforce. Very few PSE students access career development services on campuses (Magnusson, 2005);
- Career development services are devolved from the federal to the provincial/territorial

governments in Canada and then most often delivered under contract by third party providers. Therefore strategic coordination and the provision of consistent quality services is a major challenge. Ongoing stable mechanisms for sharing of policy approaches and promising practices are not in place;

- The working poor are a new frontier area of policy that is just beginning to be discussed;
- The OECD recommended greater diversity in the types of services available and the ways in which they are delivered. Some promising innovations are in evidence in Alberta including Careers in Motion, a re-fitted recreational vehicle complete with technology and resources to provide mobile career and employment services to remote communities, a career and employment services hotline staffed with career consultants and many publications available at no cost to Albertans. Many more cost-effective innovative methods are needed;
- Career development services in workplaces needs to be mapped and research is needed on the impact of career development interventions on workplace well being and on specific issues such as worklife balance.

For the Stakeholder Collaboration perspective, we pose the following questions focused on consultation and collaboration:

- D) To what extent do mechanisms exist for stakeholders to regularly consult and collaborate on career development issues?
- E) What are the major obstacles/challenges which were identified at “Working Connections” for dealing with collaboration and what strategies/good practices are underway in response to these challenges?
- F) What challenges/obstacles still lie ahead?

#### **D) Extent of Stakeholder Collaboration**

There have been significant efforts made in the last decade to build stronger connections between career development and public policy. Canada has hosted the first two international symposia directly on this theme as well as the OECD policy dissemination conference titled “Bridging the Gap”. Two subsequent provincial symposia hosted by the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta were the first to invite the employer stakeholder group to the Symposium table. “Working Connections” subsequently had a particular focus on the employer community as a key stakeholder. These have been catalysts to more regular collaboration and there are many indications that connections and collaborations have improved and sustained. However, these events occur infrequently.

The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) Labour Market Information Working group is a vehicle for sharing provincial practices and research related to LMI. It includes labour market specialists from all provinces/territories and is perhaps the strongest pan-Canadian example of a mechanism for regular collaboration. However, its focus is on LMI and not on the spectrum of career development issues. The Canada Career Consortium (CCC) is a national forum which initiates, develops and co-ordinates career and labour market information. Twelve constituency groups are represented at the CCC. They are funded by the Government of Canada and their current mandate is restricted to awareness of career resources and supporting Sector Councils in implementing their career products. The current structure and mandate do not provide avenues for consultation on broad career development and labour market issues nor for professional leadership in advancing career development practice.

The links between the career development sector and the business community sector (especially small to medium sized enterprises) remain not well developed in Canada. Challenges exist on both sides. There is a skeptical “what’s in it for me?” attitude which indicates that the career community has not proven its case to business/industry in terms of the contribution of career development to productivity, worker motivation, organizational “fit” and the return on investment. On the career practitioner side, it was evident at “*Working Connections*” that practitioners did not identify their role as closely aligned with priority issues of employers such as their need to fill critical skill shortages. Given the urgency of labour market

issues facing Canada, there is clear need for increased understanding and collaboration on behalf of common goals.

Currently available mechanisms for collaboration are inadequate for meeting these needs.

### **E) Major Identified Challenges and Examples of Current Strategies**

Four additional challenges to collaboration between stakeholders were identified at “*Working Connections*” as the following:

5. The contribution of career development to skill shortage issues and goals and to workplace issues (recruitment, retention, motivation, productivity) needs to be clearer and stronger;
6. A common language among stakeholders is needed in order for significant dialogue on common interests to occur;
7. Many workers and potential workers are underutilized; more extensive use of PLAR could be a win-win for employers, career practitioners and workers; and
8. A regular stakeholder consultative mechanism is needed.

#### ***Challenge 5: Contributions of career development to skill shortage and workplace issues***

Canada is facing enormous skill shortages in many sectors, notable the skilled trades. The position of the career development community at “*Working Connections*” seemed to be at somewhat arms length from this concern. The career practitioner core principle is to serve the interests of the individual and “hope” that in doing so, they will also meet the needs of the emerging workforce. From the employer perspective, they look to the career development community to provide concrete assistance in meeting their workforce needs in the “hope” that this would also meet the needs of individuals. Finding common ground is an important dialogue and debate which is just beginning.

At the same time, there is increasing recognition within the K-12 system, that the majority of students who do not pursue university upon graduation have been the most neglected with respect to career development programs and services. This same population is critical for employers needing to attract new workers to fill skill shortages. Promising examples of collaboration are happening:

#### **Example 1: Student Success Strategy: Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC)**

The TDSB is Canada’s largest school board with over 550 elementary and secondary schools. TASC is a coordination body which brings together representatives from business, labour, education and other professional groups to analyze and address sector-wide human resource issues. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed whereby pilot projects directly related to both increasing school graduation rates and responding to critical skill shortages will be undertaken culminating in the development of a national model which may be replicated in other boards, provinces and territorial jurisdictions.

A new Specialist-High-Skills major is being added to the Ontario graduation requirements that will allow students to complete a “bundle” of courses in specific high-skill areas of concentration that lead to employment sectors, apprenticeships and PSE destinations. “Bundles” will be arranged according to specific sectors including business, arts, manufacturing, health care, construction, hospitality, information technology and mathematics. Students will have more opportunity to participate in experiential learning and to earn industry recognized certifications. This initiative is considered to be one which is both transforming and modernizing secondary schools in Ontario, Canada’s most populous province. The three year pilot began in 2006 and will focus on career education for students and parents, embedding essential skills across the curriculum and new program development that leverages learning through education/sector council partnerships.

#### **Example 2: Saskatchewan Futures Study**

The shortage of qualified labour has become a critical issue of strategic importance to the Saskatchewan economy. Disconnects between the career choices of youth and the demands of the growing economy are impacting the capacity to assimilate these workers and creative solutions are

being sought.

The Saskatoon and District Industry-Education Council has entered into a partnership with The Futures Group to develop a program modeled after a US experience which will build an internet-based portal to allow young people to self-assess and match their attitudes, interests and abilities to the most relevant career possibilities. This part is not new. What is new are the next pieces which include customizing career content information to reflect local Saskatchewan industry needs initially in Health Care, Construction, Manufacturing and Crown Corporations. Employers in these sectors will then be connected to youth and their parents (through matching youth profiles with industry requirements) to motivate, provide guidance and mentoring in their industries and build relationships and connections with a view to building their future workforces. This is considered to be a very significant community development initiative. The project is about to complete its feasibility study and preliminary results are very encouraging. Again this prototype may be the basis for the development of a national model which may be replicated in other provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

### **Example 3: Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI)**

The WSI is the research component of the Workplace Skills Strategy described earlier which will fund employers and their partners to:

- Test new ways of enhancing the skills of their workforce; and
- Improve human resources practices in their workplaces.

Funding is available for projects from 1 to 3 years to test out innovative practices and applications which can be shared and applied across a wide range of organizations. Best practices will be publicized through a rewards and recognition program.

Proposals in response to the first call are currently being reviewed. The initiative is promising in that it is focused on supporting applied reasonably long-term research in workplaces so that follow-up data can be gathered and analyzed. This program has potential to provide a mechanism for career development interventions to be implemented in workplaces and their contribution to a range of productivity indicators evaluated. There has to date been very limited research done in Canada on career development in workplaces. This may both expand the research knowledge base and build better connections between the career development sector and business/industry.

### **Example 4: Petroleum Human Resources Sector Council**

As part of the requirement for funding, Human Resource Sector Councils are required to develop outreach strategies to recruit workers to their industries. The Petroleum Sector Council has worked with career development specialists to explore outreach strategies which move beyond career awareness materials. The Petroleum industry workforce is predominantly white male and one of their challenges is to attract more non-traditional workers. They are now considering an outreach strategy which requires them to work directly with community groups in order to reach under-represented populations and also to be transparent about shortcomings in their work environments which may be challenging with respect to person/environment “fit” for specific groups of workers. The fact that the industry is open to both introspection and innovation is very encouraging. These types of experiments may build closer partnerships between the career development community and business/industry.

### ***Challenges 6&7: Common language and more extensive use of PLAR***

“Working Connections” pointed to language as being a dividing issue among stakeholders. Career practitioners need to be able to communicate in language which speaks to the issues facing employers and to be used as policy instruments, career development needs to be much clearer about its services, how and what they deliver.

With respect to PLAR, it is estimated that the learning recognition gap costs \$46 billion annually in unrecognized skills and experience of Canada’s workforce. PLAR is an underused tool to engage more adults in learning and to qualify them for employment. Few career development practitioners are proficient in PLAR. The employer community needs skilled workers; career practitioners can be instrumental in assessing acquire and transferable skills.

### **Example 1: Common Language Working Group**

Efforts to create a common career language were sparked by the Alberta Symposium of 2002. A Common Language sub-committee developed a Common Career Language matrix which provides users with definitions of six career development terms (career; career development; work; sector; community economic development; labour market). As you read across the matrix, the definition expands, explaining the values and benefits of this definition for the 3 stakeholder groups of employers, policy makers and practitioners. The matrix is online at: [www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca/matrix](http://www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca/matrix).

### **Example 2: The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs)**

*“The Reflective Practitioner: the Role of the Career Practitioner and PLAR”* was developed as part of the S&Gs educational materials. One of the field test sites working with the S&Gs located in Nova Scotia, undertook a province-wide test to use PLA and a portfolio process for career practitioners to self-assess competencies against the S&Gs. This same group is about to publish an expanded Guide to PLAR for Career Practitioners to use both within their own professional practice and with their client groups. The Guide will be available nationally.

### **Example 3: Province of Québec Prior learning assessment of basic adult education**

The Québec government adopted a “Lifelong Learning Policy” in 2002, and in 2005, developed better access of services to assist adults in PLAR. Reception, referral, counselling and support services give new horizons to thousands of adults without a basic education. The main principles are: access to knowledge leads to economic development and social cohesion; both basic education and lifelong learning contribute to lifelong learning; the right to education must be translated into actions to raise demand for education and lifelong learning (Dupont, Manon, IAEVG Conference, Lisbonne, 2005).

### **Challenge 8: Regular stakeholder consultative mechanisms**

As noted earlier, there is no regular pan-Canadian stakeholder consultative mechanism which brings employers, career development leaders and researchers and policy makers to the table around the spectrum of career development issues. There are some promising possibilities for developing such a mechanism. Among these are:

- The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) is considering establishing a Career Development Working Group. Should this occur, this could provide a very useful forum for ongoing consultation;
- The Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) is a pan-Canadian body of K-12 and PSE senior policy makers. Career Development has not yet been a recognized priority for CMEC. Were this to occur, this also could provide a very valuable forum for ongoing problem-solving;
- The Canadian Council on Learning and its 5 Knowledge Centres – particularly the Work and Learning Knowledge Centre and the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre – may in future be a vehicle for comprehensive consultation amongst stakeholders. Some of this is already happening, but it is still early to assess how much collaboration will result from their activities;
- The “Working Connections” pan-Canadian Symposium provincial/territorial team model was successful in stimulating dialogue and debate among stakeholders and specific action plans are still being actively implemented in many provincial/territorial jurisdictions almost three years later. Were Symposia to occur on a bi-annual basis, they could promote increased understanding and collaboration between stakeholder groups.

### **F) Challenges/Obstacles still ahead**

Among the ongoing challenges to ongoing collaboration between policy makers, practitioners and business/industry are the following:

- The absence of an established regular forum for stakeholder dialogue on career development, public policy and workforce development. This was considered by several Symposium teams as the “number 1” challenge for career development in Canada. The way forward to establish and sustain stakeholder dialogue is not clear;

- The appropriate roles and responsibilities of career practitioners in responding directly to individual students/clients and at the same time assisting to meet skill shortages has not been debated and resolved. As a result, expectations among stakeholders are not necessarily clear and while there are some exceptions, professional preparation programs have not adjusted to the demand for more labour market specific knowledge and competency;
- Some progress has been made with common language but much more is needed;
- The career development needs of small and medium enterprises and the role career development can play in helping to meet these needs remains unclear. A recent survey 60% of firms with fewer than 20 employees have no plan or budget for workplace training (this would include career development for workers). On the other hand, only 5% of firms with more than 500 employees had no plan or budget. Partnerships with educational institutions were cited as one of the most effective strategies in increasing workplace learning. Partnerships with career development have not yet been explored (Viewpoints, 2005);
- Strategies are needed to expand the use and applications of PLA by the career practitioner community.

## **Theme 6: The Information Base for Public Policy Making**

The need to “make the case” to policy developers that investing in career development programs and services yields learning outcomes and social and economic impacts and provides a good return on investment has been recognized as a critical issue from the first international Symposium in 1999. We are making significant strides forward in our efforts to “make the case”.

In addressing the Information Base, we pose the following questions:

- G) What is the state of practice of our existing information/evidence base?
- H) What are the major obstacles/challenges which were identified at “Working Connections” with respect to having a strong information base and what strategies/good practices are underway in response to these challenges?
- I) What challenges/obstacles still lie ahead?

### **G) State of practice**

A consistent theme that emerged from both International and the Canadian Symposia was the need to develop effective systems of gathering data that attest to the impact that career development/career guidance services have on a number of levels. These include individual well-being, learning goals, including improving the efficiency of the education and training system, labour market goals, including improving the match between supply and demand, and social equity goals, including supporting equal opportunity and promoting social inclusion. It was recognized in all forums that improved data is needed to inform and influence public policy related to the provision of career services. However, despite an increased awareness of the need to better understand how and why career services are effective, the number of outcome research studies has actually decreased in the last 20 years (Whiston et al., 2003). This decline may be attributable, in part, to the growing recognition of the complexity of career planning. Very few studies have been published that actually measure and report service outcomes and impacts (Magnusson & Roest, 2004). A recent literature review further points to the paucity of Canadian studies in this area. Currently, a number of initiatives have been attempting to address this gap.

### **H) Major identified challenges and examples of current strategies**

The major challenges to having a strong evidence base for public policy making identified at the pan-Canadian Symposium were the following:

9. Meaningful information gathering strategies (measures, outcomes, evaluation ) and results based data to demonstrate the effectiveness of career development programs and services are not readily available;
10. Existing research is not broadly shared and researchers have no way of tying their efforts

together.

### ***Challenge 9: Information gathering and results based data are not available***

#### **Example 1: The Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice (CRWG)**

One of the outcomes of the pan-Canadian Symposium was the creation of the CRWG. A group of 15 academics in career development from 6 universities across Canada (English/French) was assembled in Ottawa in March 2004 to begin work on the development of a framework for evaluating career development services. A literature review was conducted and a national survey of practitioners to assess the current state of practice of evaluation of career services was conducted in 2004-2005. A report was released in January 2006. The main findings were:

- although the vast majority of services providers and practitioners think that evaluating services is important, only a minority, mostly in employment services do it;
- outcome data collected is mainly immediate results such as changes in current situations (employment; enrolment in training);
- learning and behavioral outcomes were reported achieved but not measured and reported on (changes in attitude; creation of support networks; skill development);
- gathering outcome data was difficult ( i.e. time consuming; lack of resources devoted to it; lack of standard evaluation protocols and outcome definitions; lack of training in evaluation methods); and
- there is a need to both develop an evaluation culture within career development practice and to support it with training, resources and tools.

The CRWG has developed a draft framework for evaluating the effectiveness of career interventions and is seeking funding to test out the framework. The CRWG has a longer term vision of developing an evidence based toolkit which would consist of:

- an on-line inventory of interventions and supporting input, process and outcome data for each;
- an on-line training course in evaluation and accountability and a workbook of data gathering instruments and instructions on how to apply them; and
- a “behind the on-line inventory” bank of data for researchers.

Achievement of this toolkit will be dependent on future funding. The CRWG is positioned to be a leading force for career development research in Canada.

#### **Example 2: FLMM LMI Working Group:**

The FLMM LMI Working Group commissioned a research consortium in career development at the University of Sherbrooke to conduct a literature review on the role of career and LMI in career decision making. The main findings were:

- information is useful if it is contextualized to the client situation;
- information in career decision making is more effective if it is discussed with a counsellor;
- the cognitive capacity of the client to receive information has to be considered.

They have now asked the CRWG to develop a research design for evaluating the short and medium term impacts of LMI.

### ***Challenge 10: Existing research is not broadly shared***

One of the highlights of the pan-Canadian Symposium was a panel of career development, employer and public policy researchers discussing recent research findings and implications for practice. It became quickly evident that there was very limited knowledge exchange between research groups as well as across Francophone and Anglophone universities and that a vehicle to do this would be valuable. The following forums hold promise for such a vehicle:

- The Knowledge Centres of the Canadian Council on Learning. Each centre has a research

budget to support research projects of up to 3 years duration. Research priorities have recently been established and calls for proposals will be forthcoming;

- The Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI) is positioned to support research and innovation in workplace learning;
- The International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) is now established to provide a vehicle for international knowledge transfer on policy approaches and evidence based research. Canada has been an active in-kind contributor and will be on the Board of Directors to help steer directions. It is possible that the CRWG could become the Canadian arm of the ICCDPP;
- The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has funded research projects related to the role of a number of variables, including career development, in student decisions to pursue PSE. A current longitudinal research study titled Future to Discover is underway in the provinces of Manitoba and New Brunswick. The project will follow students from grade 10 through to the beginning of Year 2 in any PSE program. Between grades 10-12, the students in the study receive (or do not receive) a number of career related classroom based interventions, a student ambassador intervention, magazine and website and a bursary upon graduation. This is a controlled study which will allow comparisons of outcomes between control and experimental groups of students. This is the kind of longitudinal research which has been recognized as much needed in the career development field.

### **I) Challenges/Obstacles still ahead**

- Securing research funding. Research dollars are lean and the competition for them is strong. Career development researchers need to build very strong cases and innovative proposals to be successful;
- The lack of an accountability/evaluation culture in career development which is part of professional practice, included in professional preparation programs and in evaluations of programs and services;
- There is always a tension between the evidence base required by policy developers which tends to be quantitative and the career development research community which tends to be more qualitative. Both sides need to bend to understand the imperatives of the other. Ongoing mechanisms for this to occur are not yet available.

### **Canada Theme: Professionalization of Career Development Practice**

Consistent with the OECD Study conclusion that globally, career development is “weakly professionalized”, increased professionalism of the career development community is an overarching issue in Canada. The analogy has been made that while we have the roadmap, we do not have the vehicle.

- Voluntary Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners are well positioned as an organizing framework to build consistency in professional training programs. Some provinces are introducing certification requirements. There is no national coordination to create a pan-Canadian approach and to address training and mobility challenges;
- The province of Québec is an exception where one occupation in the field of career development, career counselling, has been regulated for more than 40 years. University programs have been developed to meet the requirements of the occupation (Bachelor and Masters combined). Regulation has had a positive influence on the competency requirements for other occupations in the field, namely, employment counselling, career information and career education. There are many good practice examples in the Quebec experience;
- Professional preparation programs are increasingly being aligned against the S&Gs at both community college and university; many exceptions remain and university post-graduate specializations in career development in English are rare and need to be instituted;

- The Blueprint for LifeWork Designs is well established in the K-12 sector as a template for identifying learning outcomes and for planning and evaluating programs and services. It has not yet been introduced into PSE or into workplaces;
- Vibrant career development professional associations exist at the provincial and territorial levels but none at national level (The Canadian Counselling Association has a Career Development Chapter with 200 members, a fraction of the career development practitioner population);
- The SLAC of the Canadian Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) has identified six priorities needed to move to increased professionalization and has endorsed the Canadian Career Development Foundation to undertake a consultation to examine these with the sector and organize an action forum based on the results. Priorities are:
  - A mechanism for ongoing provincial/territorial dialogue to address inconsistencies in the development of standards for the sector
  - Benchmarks for evidence of competency, models of regulation and recognition of training
  - Role and terminology clarification
  - A way to continue a national forum to ensure a national voice for the sector
  - A national professional organization/association
  - A mechanism for regular stakeholder collaboration

The professionalization of career development practice is a major issue which must be addressed systematically and collaboratively in the near future. Enforced professional standards and professional development are necessary for career development practitioners to be recognized as key contributors to lifelong learning and workforce development goals. There is no doubt that the career development community is a committed and passionate community. As one member of the Canadian Team stated, however, "We have spent too long being a religion; we need to be a profession."

### **Conclusion:**

In this paper, we have outlined several examples of strategies and good-practice initiatives underway which respond to specific challenges in the Canadian labour market. There are innovative and practical initiatives to better connect career development programs, practices and solutions with workforce development challenges. Progress is being made. The paper further identifies many challenges yet to be addressed, both collaboratively with stakeholders and as an autonomous professional sector. Among the many challenges cited, most pressing in "Shaping the Future" of career development in Canada are:

- Establishing a regular ongoing mechanism for stakeholder (policy, employer, practitioner, researcher) collaboration at the pan-Canadian level;
- Building greater cohesion and professionalization of the career development sector including a culture of evaluation and accountability;
- Developing a strong evidence base and an evaluation culture in career development practice;
- Increasing engagement of students in education and training institutions in their own career development;
- Ensuring that career development based strategies address needs of employers as well as employed workers and contribute to quality worklife and workplaces.

There is growing recognition of the issues and stakeholder partners are increasingly willing to work collaboratively on finding timely solutions. Canadian workforce development challenges are significant. Policy makers and the employer community are seeking better strategies to address these challenges. Career development must become part of the solution to these challenges. To do so the field as a whole will need to extend its reach and see both policy makers and employers as also their clients and their issues as also career development issues. One "Working Connections" participant called this a "cusp of opportunity" for the career development community. The community needs to respond to this cusp of opportunity if we are to shape the future and not merely be shaped by it.

**Submitted by: Team Canada, March, 2006**

## **Appendix A**

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# Denmark

**Topic covered:**  
Employability skills

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**Topic covered:**  
Labour supply

**Prepared by:**  
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## **Strategies and good-practice examples**

### **Young people with special needs for guidance (in relation to choice of education, training and career)**

An earlier, more specific and individually based effort is needed in order to support the transition from compulsory education to youth education.

Especially young people with various problems and special needs are to be identified earlier. The number of youth educations ( general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education and training) are to be introduced to pupils earlier than now (8<sup>th</sup> form typically). The individual transition plan (in form 9) is to be started earlier as well.

The guidance counsellors from the Youth Guidance Centres start an individual, educational logbook with each pupil in form 6. They are also responsible for the individual transition plan, which describes plans and objectives after compulsory school. This plan is part of the youth education enrolment.

- early guidance
- individual planning of education and career starting in form 6, -focusing on a preventive effort in order to identify pupils with special needs
- educational- and guidance programs individually planned
- 4 to 36-weeks' bridging courses at different youth education institutions
- various training- and work placement periods

The use of bridging courses are to increase, but not only in the traditional way. It is important that bridging is established not only between schools, but also between schools and work placements, unpaid, that is. This hopefully enables a young person with special needs to make a realistic choice, perhaps an employment, and not least to complete an educational programme.

Positive experiences have been achieved through bridging adapted to different groups of age. The lower secondary students themselves claim that bridging gives the best knowledge and experience for making decisions regarding choice of further education.<sup>i</sup> Further knowledge of vocational upper secondary education is emphasized.

Surveys show the same result from students in the optional form 10.<sup>i</sup> These students' choice of youth education is closely connected to their actual bridging experience. Therefore bridging is widely recommended and arranged by the guidance counsellors.

### **Mentors**

Young people with special needs must have the possibility of a personal mentor. Special needs are e.g. lack of adult contact and support during their daily activities.

A mentor can be connected in form 9 and continue until the young person is doing well in his upper secondary education, general or vocational. If needed the mentor can continue his support till the youth education or training is completed. The mentor thus cooperates with different educational as well as social institutions.

When a program including a mentor is planned, surveys, results and evaluations from the vocational upper secondary education and training and from the youth guidance centres are taken into account. Already existing laws and regulations, such as active employment and integration, are coordinated in the program. This means that the young person, preferably, has the same mentor all the way through his education or training. It also simplifies regulations concerning the use of mentors.

It is important to ensure that the mentors, appointed to young people from ethnic minorities, are able to understand the cultural differences specific for the young person in question. Parents e.g. play an important role when decisions regarding education and career are made.

Some of these young people do not have either family or friends to guide and support them.<sup>i</sup> Therefore it is motivating to have a personal mentor, who is able to give educational as well as social support.

The guidance and support needed by this particular group is beyond the responsibility of the youth guidance counsellor such as it is today.<sup>i</sup>

A proposition of law is made in order to ensure that parents become part of the guidance.

Social problems and conflicts are frequent in this particular group. Specific skills and education are needed in order to solve problems. The guidance counsellors have not these qualifications.

Usually, more time is needed, all aspects of the young person must be included.

A cooperation between the social, educational and employment sectors has turned out to be positive in a pilot project. It showed that the municipality supplied help and support quickly when needed.<sup>i</sup>

The use of mentors are also established in the vocational upper secondary education and training for students who need adult contact and support. This agreement can start in form 9 if it is considered beneficial for the young person. Some vocational schools already use mentors, educational guides etc. It is still, however, on a tentative basis. The results will be used in order to make a general mentor agreement. This agreement will also include the mentor agreement in the law about active employment and integration.

The municipalities have a special duty to guide young people who do not complete a youth education. These young people are one of our main target groups. Focus has to be on young people who are confused in their choice of education, vocation or career. Pro-active guidance must be given a higher priority.

In Denmark, all young people between the age of 15 to 19 are contacted by a youth guidance counsellor if they have not started a secondary education or training. Drop out students are also contacted.

The cooperation of guidance to complete an education or training in the VET programs ( vocational upper secondary education ) must be intensified. It has proved to be important and useful that the youth guidance counsellor is present at the vocational institutions. He has to be in close contact with the teacher and counsellor in order to make a difference for the young person with special needs.

The young person who is about to drop his education or training can be persuaded to continue if the guidance is personal and instructive and furthermore, sets up goals to be aimed at. Thus it is possible to prevent young people from dropping out.

### **Vocational basic training programs (EGU)**

A 2-year vocational basic training gives vocational qualifications. This program is a special option for young people who do not complete their youth education, or for those who are not able to start an ordinary youth program.

The vocational basic training program is planned and arranged by the municipality and the youth guidance centre is responsible of the guidance. The guidance counsellor works as a mentor for the young person throughout his program.

At the moment we have 700 to 900 young people in a vocational basic training program. This shows that the municipalities use this possibility in a very limited way. We have a need for more basic training

programs. Completed programs have been successful. In 2003 25% continued an ordinary, educational program and 39% entered the labour market.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Mette Pless og Noemi Katznelson (2005): "Niende klasse og hvad så?". Midtvejsrapport. Center for ungdomsforskning, Learning Lab Denmark. [http://www.cefu.dk/forudbestil\\_rapport/](http://www.cefu.dk/forudbestil_rapport/)

<sup>ii</sup> Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration (januar 2005): "Udlændinge på ungdomsuddannelserne – frafald og faglige kundskaber". Tænketanken om udfordringer for integrationsindsatsen i Danmark i samarbejde med AKF. [http://www.inm.dk/publikationer/taenketank\\_ungdom\\_uddannelse/pdf/Udlaendinge\\_paa\\_ungdomsuddannelserne.pdf](http://www.inm.dk/publikationer/taenketank_ungdom_uddannelse/pdf/Udlaendinge_paa_ungdomsuddannelserne.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Ulla Højmark (2004): "Kan de ikke bare tage sig sammen? – om de unge uden uddannelse". Fra "Unge i tal og tekst", Center for Ungdomsforskning, Learning Lab Denmark. [http://www.cefu.dk/upload/application/8d70e605/nr3og4\\_dec2004.pdf](http://www.cefu.dk/upload/application/8d70e605/nr3og4_dec2004.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Mette Pless og Noemi Katznelson (2005): ): "Niende klasse og hvad så?". Center for ungdomsforskning, Learning Lab Denmark. [http://www.cefu.dk/forudbestil\\_rapport/](http://www.cefu.dk/forudbestil_rapport/)

<sup>v</sup> Undervisningsministeriet (2005): "Fra frafald til fastholdelse – god praksis i erhvervsuddannelserne". Temahæfteserie, nr. 2, 2005 (UVM7-367). <http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/fracald/>

<sup>vi</sup> Forslag til Handlingsplan for at alle unge gennemfører en ungdomsuddannelse. Undervisningsministeriet feb. 2006 fra udvalget om at alle unge gennemfører en ungdomsuddannelse. <http://www.uvm.dk/06/flere.htm?menuid=641015>

## **Boosting Labour Supply through Recognition of Prior Learning - What should be the Role of Guidance?**

In Denmark great importance has recently been placed on career guidance in relation to the recognition of prior learning as a means of increasing labour force participation rates to boost the economy. This paper explores these assumptions about the effects of such career guidance and asks: How do Danish policymakers picture career guidance in terms of increasing labour force participation rates? How do they see the role of career development services in relation to recognition of prior learning? How can career development programmes and services such as recognition of prior learning support lifelong learners who are willing and committed to actively engage in the labour market?

In the “Annual economic survey, Denmark”, the OECD (2005) OECD, concludes that Denmark will not be able to afford one of the world’s most generous welfare systems unless it also has one of the highest labour participation rates (OECD 2005). This strongly indicates that Denmark needs to include more people in the labour force. In response, the Danish Government has undertaken an initiative on the Recognition of prior learning (UVM 2004 et. al), and has established a tripartite committee on lifelong skills enhancement for all on the labour market. This paper will explore these policy initiatives in order to address the above questions and to identify further issues that need to be addressed by guidance practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

Recognition of prior learning is presented as a solution to the abovementioned challenges. The government’s policy paper “Recognition of Prior Learning within the Education System” emphasises that economic interests for both society and companies interplay and are connected with individuals’ motivation to engage in adult education. It is assumed that offering an individual the possibility of engaging in a process of identification of prior learning will be a motivating factor by itself (UVM et al. 2004). The tripartite committee states that ‘there is a general connection between individuals’ level of education and their motivation to participate in lifelong learning’. They conclude that a challenge is to get the low-educated “through the door” and into the educational institutions (FM 2006). Both the tripartite committee and the government emphasise the importance of engaging in education in terms of this particular group on the labour market. The tripartite committee indicates that the employers play a crucial role in motivating this target group (FM 2006). A question of interest is what should be the role of guidance in the process of recognition of prior learning? The government and the tripartite committee both state that enhanced career guidance should play an important role.

The government argues that the general guidance system must be able to:

- Give the individual a chance to clarify ambitions and goals
- Refer the individual to relevant education and training and, when relevant, inform the individual of possibilities of assessment and recognition of prior learning within the education system
- Facilitate access to tools that support documentation of prior learning, for the purpose of individual competence assessment (UVM et al. 2004).

Further the government states that:

- The process of recognition of prior learning at the individual educational institution begins with guidance and support in relation to the individual’s own documentation of prior learning.
- The possibilities of guidance, documentation, assessment and recognition of prior learning in relation to the education/training programme must be presented to the individual as a coherent offer (UVM et al. 2004).

Similarly, the tripartite committee reaches to the same conclusions on the importance of an enhanced career guidance system, adding to this:

- Employers and trade unions play an important role in motivating people to take further education (FM2006).

Anticipating the government’s 2004 initiative on recognition of prior learning the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) prepared a publication with the Title: “Assessment of prior learning – you carry more in

your luggage than you think” (LO 2003). LO indicated that recognition of prior learning is a positive approach, but it is equally important that

- Recognition of prior learning should not be used as a way of legitimizing a reduction of expenses (for the state, employers and unions) on adult education.
- The possibility (and the right) for the individual to engage in formal education must not be replaced by non-formal education or workplace learning.

LO recommends that guidance shall take place independently of interest of educational institutions.

Therefore LO recommends that Centres for Adult Guidance are established and that guidance is offered by guidance practitioners certificated by the state.

Moreover, the European social partners point to the role of guidance and underscore the fact that there is a significant amount of reported joint activities related to the issue of guidance. (ETUC 2004).

Denmark has a long tradition of non-formal Adult Education (Folkeoplysning, i.e. The People's Enlightenment), and for several years the Danish Adult Education Association (DFS) has been engaged in discussing and developing recognition of prior learning. In an open letter to the present Danish Minister of Education, DFS expressed its view on the role of guidance: Guidance services for adults should be independent and include the third sector as a partner; quality must be secured; and recognition of prior learning must be the right of the individual, which also includes the right to abstain from the process (DFS 2005).

As a result of this short analysis of central Danish policy papers on recognition of prior learning and adult education, we can identify further issues to be addressed:

What should be the role of guidance practitioners, policy makers, employers and trade unions in motivating low-skilled and un-educated people to engage in the identification of their competences, recognition of their prior learning and adult education?

How can research help to move beyond the assumption that the possibility for individuals to engage in a process of identifying own competences is a motivating factor by itself? Which other motivating factors are in play, and how can they be a part of an adult guidance system?

How can employers and trade unions be included in international discussions about the use of guidance to develop the workforce and labour supply? What would be the pros and cons?

#### Future strategies

At the moment it is possible for many different groups to engage in a process of identifying their own competences. There are already a variety of tools developed by companies, organisations related to the labour market. But identification and documentation tools in order to ensure the best possible interaction between individual's work and leisure pursuits – and the competence assessment vis-à-vis the education system - need to be developed further.

The methods are diverse and the results have not been investigated yet. This points to a need for reviewing the current guidance practices regarding:

- General possibilities for recognition of prior learning within all parts of the education system
- Information about the effect of using different tools for individuals' identification of competences and the availability of these tools.

However, as a follow-up to the government 2004 policy paper on recognition of prior learning within the education system, the Ministry of Education is presently developing such identification and documentation tools in the form of a portfolio in cooperation with on the one hand, the social partners and on the other hand, stakeholders in the 'third sector' (liberal adult education organisations and voluntary organisations etc.). These development projects should be completed by autumn 2006.

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# Finland

## **Topics covered:**

Labour supply  
Employability skills  
The information base for policy making

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## 1 Introduction

In Finland careers information, guidance and counselling services are provided mainly by two established public service systems: student counselling within the public school system, and the information, guidance and counselling services run by the public labour administration. There is a clear division of labour between these two systems. Schools have the main responsibility for student counselling, with the guidance and counselling services of the employment offices complementing school-based services, being mainly targeted at clients outside the education and training institutions. The national educational and labour market policies are emphasising individual learning programs from lifelong learning perspective.

The guidance provision in Finland was evaluated in primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education during 2000–2005. The Ministry of Labour evaluated the guidance provision in public employment services during 2001–2002. This paper describes briefly some of the initiatives in meeting the challenges identified in the evaluations.

## 2 Employability skills

Within the educational settings the national evaluations revealed *a growing need and demand for career guidance*, which is a result of changes in working life as well as factors that have increased the flexibility of the school system and the individuality of studies. There were not enough counsellors to meet the increased demand. According to the results the students got information how to apply to secondary or tertiary education but less current labour market information. The focus of the career education programmes was on completion of programmes not so much transitional issues from life long learning perspective.

In order to meet the challenges identified in the evaluations the Finnish National Board of Education executed new national guidelines for guidance provision and career education for the comprehensive and upper secondary level general education in 2003–2004. The guidelines describe the overall goals of guidance and the minimum level of the content of the career education curricula. The municipalities are required to provide a strategic and operational plan for the guidance provision and the regular evaluation of services. Within guidance delivery different counselling methods should be used in a flexible way. In addition career education lessons, students should have enough individual and small group counselling.

The new curriculum guidelines emphasize the skills to learn to use different sources of information, especially Internet. One of the indicators of effective guidance and counselling services is that the students have enough tools for making relevant decisions in transition phases of their study path. This means that they have enough information about educational opportunities, they have learnt by experience what the working life is like and they have knowledge on different occupations and labour market trends.

The guidance and counselling services in different educational settings are seen as a process which prepares students for transitions and the future's society and gives students tools for life long learning. This means that the whole study path from comprehensive school to the secondary education and to working life or further education should be taken into consideration when writing local strategies for guidance and counselling services. These strategies should include descriptions of cooperation between educational stages. The local curricula should define the organization of different follow-up systems. As a whole, these guidelines promote regional and institutional networks among counsellors and teachers in different educational settings.

At a local level all young people in City of Tampere who have completed their basic education are guaranteed a place for further studies and flexible transition. Drop -outs from upper secondary education will be given help to find their own path, e.g. with the assistance of special activities that are designed to guide to a student's path to vocational education and training, and a career. A follow-up system according to a Tampere model, consisting of guidance and counselling services, supplemented with support services, when necessary, has been created to monitor the career paths of these young people.

Multi-professional cooperation is defined by the new legislation for students' welfare care in comprehensive and secondary education. The same legislation emphasises that the schools are obliged to write strategies for the cooperation between school and home, as well. Thus, the active role of parents is further promoted in Finnish school system by the legislation taken in use in the beginning of August 2003.

In December 2003 the Finnish National Board of Education launched a significant national initiative to promote the implementation of the new national curriculum guidelines. The initiative works in partnership with existing parallel national projects which are focusing on holistic services in adult education and social inclusion in the transition from comprehensive education to secondary education. The other goal is also to coordinate regional cross-sectoral activities and share experienced and good practices created in these projects. The national initiative is a network of 48 regional sub-projects. There is good co-operation with the Finnish association for Guidance Counsellors.

According to the new legislation for polytechnics (2003) and universities (2005) the institutions must have procedures how to support students in making individual study plans with portfolio approach taking into account both learning and career management skills. The Ministry of Education supports the implementation of this approach with national pilots and in-service training for faculty members (<http://www.w5w.fi/> and <http://www.hamk.fi/oped-exo/>). Within individual level the institutions have been developing indicators identifying how this process is promoted and supported and monitored as a part of the quality assurance systems of the whole organisation.

Labour market training is a part of active labour policy. It is also a part of the system for vocational education for adults, which further includes self-motivated vocational education for adults and personnel training. Labour market training is planned on the regional level and is based on anticipation of workforce skills needs, in cooperation with representatives of the business sector and labour market organisations. It is thus used to prevent unemployment and labour shortages and improve the functioning of the labour market by responding to the changes in volumes, types of work and regional emphasis which occur on the labour market. Labour market training is primarily intended for the unemployed. However, other groups such as those outside the labour market and employed people can also receive this kind of training.

The training consists mainly of vocational training, whether basic, re-training, further or supplementary. Student feedback on vocational labour market training shows that the quality of on-the-job learning arrangements, guidance and tasks has developed but it needs still attention, a development project has been launched.

The funding model in labour market support encourages the municipalities to further activate the unemployed and to improve the quality of measures. The State and the municipalities would share the immediate financial costs of unemployment in a more logical way than today. In the reformed system, the funding of the labour market support will be determined by the duration of the support. The responsibility for financing other forms of labour market support would still rest in its entirety with the State. The State will also provide the cost of active measures and maintenance allowances similarly to the current situation.

In order to target labour market policy measures at those unemployed persons who need them the most and to increase the remunerativeness of the labour market support, a specific new active period is introduced. During this active period, jobs and labour market policy measures will be offered to the unemployed person in an intensified manner. The objective is that for about one half of the active period, the jobseeker should take part in measures promoting the finding of employment. The active period would at the latest start once the labour market support has been paid for 500 days. The objective of the reform is to raise the activation rate of those jobseekers having received labour market support for 500 days from the current 20 % to 30 %.

Career guidance and training the employability skills is crucial for refugees and recent migrants in helping them to find their place in the labour market. According to the Finnish integration law (1999, 2005) the

immigrants have the right to an integration plan. This includes the definition of the individual needs and goals of the immigrant and the services that are needed to gain the goals. Recognition and validation of the former professional qualifications are essential for adult immigrants. Many times, anyway, applying the former profession in the new home country is difficult or impossible, in these cases career guidance as early as possible is important for the individual. In the Finnish integration training the vocational planning as well as knowing the labour market and the educational system are equally important as the language training.

Career guidance and educational information services are available for the immigrants also after the integration period of three years. According to the statistics run by the Ministry of Labour the immigrants use actively the educational information service. Career guidance provided by the vocational psychologists at the employment offices is, anyhow, not used very actively by the immigrants. Immigrants are not many times aware of the possibilities to use the services and the language barrier is quite high also for the psychologists. Many times an interpreter should be used and this makes the threshold higher both for the clients and the psychologists. As to training the employability skills special job clubs for adult immigrants are organised by many employment offices. It is, anyway, important that the immigrant clients are integrated in the job clubs for Finnish clients as soon as the immigrants have gained a sufficient level in the Finnish language.

During the recent years a lot of effort has been made to improve the overall service system for immigrants in Finland. The national guidelines for the curriculum for integration training will be published during the year 2006 by the Finnish National Board of Education. The guidelines include also the validation of former competencies as well as goals for vocational guidance. Finland has also been one of the pioneer countries in developing the competence-based vocational qualifications. More than 350 vocational qualifications can be taken within the national qualification system. There are a lot of development work going on in Finland concerning the personalisation of the preparatory training and the testing the competencies especially for adult immigrants. A guidebook for the experts organising the qualifications will include special instructions concerning the immigrants.

### **3 Labour supply**

According to the public labour policy strategy of the Finnish Ministry of Labour the vision for 2010 is: "Finland will be a knowledge-based welfare state with employment opportunities for all. Employment services will be reorganised to meet the challenges of the new labour market situation and the changing working life."

The main strategic guidelines of Finnish labour policy as well as the Government's Employment Policy Programme are:

- 1.Reducing structural unemployment and preventing exclusion.
- 2.Ensuring the availability of skilled labour.
- 3.Enhancing work productivity
- 4.Creating preconditions for an active, employment-based immigration policy.
- 5.Increasing entrepreneurship and self-employment.

The final target is to raise the workforce participation rate. To achieve this it is necessary to include client groups difficult to employ (eg. disabled, long term unemployed, immigrants and unemployed young people) into education, training and working life.

The public employment services (PES) and active measures provided by PES have an important role to play in fulfilling these targets. The strategy and policies of the Career guidance services at PES are developed as a part of the labour policy strategy and PES services as a whole. Career guidance services and the Vocational development services of PES are central in reducing unemployment and preventing exclusion as well as ensuring the availability of skilled labour. These services are in principle available to all client groups, not only to job seekers or unemployed clients.

The *Youth Society Guarantee* aiming at reducing and preventing youth unemployment, will be implemented for the period 2003–2007. In this inter-sectoral employment programme, the labour authorities have the principal responsibility for implementing the society guarantee for unemployed young people while the education authorities are responsible for the education and training guarantee. The Youth Society Guarantee is composed of intensified labour services, intersectoral service co-operation, labour market measures and programmes for young people. The main target group is young people (< 25 years) who have been unemployed for three months. The main aim of the guarantee is that every young unemployed person should be offered a place in further education, practical training, or a workshop activity after a period of three months unemployment.

The society guarantee includes intensified co-operation between educational sector, employment authorities, and the labour market. The educational authorities are responsible for the education and for the transition from education to employment by e.g. developing student and education counselling. Co-operation and team work are emphasized in implementing the PES services to young unemployed. Career guidance services are an important part of the youth service provision.

The evaluation of the youth guarantee service will be monitored by the employment agency every year. In 2006 the Ministry of Labour will evaluate the youth unemployment situation and the implementation of the youth society guarantee.

#### *Vocational rehabilitation services - disabled clients*

At different stages of life, an injury, illness or some other limitation concerning health may weaken persons' working capacity. These may also affect the choice of occupation, the placement in work or the remaining in work. The vocational rehabilitation planning services provided by the employment offices help drawing up such plans and solutions related to work or training where the client's health is taken into consideration. The vocational rehabilitation services are based on the cooperation between clients and officials. Vocational guidance psychologists assist clients who need vocational guidance or guidance in career planning or in the application for training. The employment consultants administering rehabilitation issues provide services, when jobseekers need guidance and counselling.

In Finland, the structure of the general labour market has over the years been distorted by very high levels of early retirement. This has meant the exit from the labour market of a large number of individuals who would fall into the disabled category, but are now no longer actively seeking work. While this may relieve unemployment statistics, it is increasingly being called into question and government is seeking to counteract, because of concerns over securing availability of skilled labour.

The Non-Discrimination Act (21/2004) came into force on 1 February 2004, implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The purpose of the Act is to foster and safeguard equality and enhance the protection provided by law to those who have been subjected to discrimination in cases that fall under the scope of application of the Act. Therefore, the general rule is that the *vocational guidance services* include into the universal service systems, which are supplemented by the special services tailored for disabled persons: examinations of the health and aptitude, rehabilitation examinations, expert consultations, work and training try-outs, visits to vocational institutions and work try-outs at workplaces.

#### **4 The information base for public policy**

The recent national evaluations of guidance provision in Finland revealed that there is a need to develop more sustainable evidence base for institutional and national guidance policy making. The following chapters describe some of the national initiatives established in order to meet this challenge.

According to the current legislation the evaluation of education and training is a mandatory task for the training providers. In 2003 the Finnish National Board of Education has launched a web-based service (<http://www.edu.fi>) for the institutional evaluation of guidance and counselling services on comprehensive and secondary level. The framework is based on the Board of Education's model of evaluation concerning

productivity of education (1988), and its bases are the goals concerning study guidance in curricula, educational legislation and other education-related target documents. The efficacy of career guidance includes efficiency, effectiveness and financial accountability<sup>1</sup>.

Within the on line evaluation tool there are separate questions for comprehensive schools, upper general secondary level education and secondary level education institutes. The institutions can download the questionnaires on their server and after that the students, parents, school counsellors and principals are asked to fill the Internet-based questionnaire by an agreed dead line. After each response the application generates an on-line profile of the guidance according to the following set of indicators:

- Access for guidance
- The facilities and resources for guidance
- The goals and aims of career guidance
- Coherence of guidance services within the school
- Individual learning programme
- Study skills of the students
- Ability for further educational and career plans
- Client satisfaction of career guidance services
- Prevention of social exclusion

The components of the barometer are illustrated also with graphics generated by the application. For example the perceived necessity and the access can be reflected in the same figure. Additionally the application provides graphics based on the responses from the different audiences.

The usage of the on line evaluation tool is supported by trained regional consultants. The aim is to further elaborate these tools within the national development project of guidance in 2003-2007. Currently the National Board of Education is planning how to connect this institutional data with a national sustainable reference source.

There is a good example of the use of this on line evaluation tool at local level in City of Tampere as a part of national development project. As a result of the evaluation evidence City Council of Tampere decided in 2005 to increase guidance and counselling services at comprehensive schools.

In the last decade the Ministry of Labour has introduced continuous quality development projects at every level of the labour administration, focussing on labour services in general. The principle has mainly been to support regional and local individual and also small-scale quality development and standard setting projects. In this connection there have been a few projects also in the field of information, guidance and counselling services, some of them supported by the Ministry.

The Ministry of labour established criteria for quality standards for all service products in 2000-2001. These standards have not been systematically followed up, but mainly used as a basis for client follow-up studies and staff training in client services. The standards are focusing on

- Vocational Guidance And Career Planning;
- Personal Vocational Guidance
- Training And Vocational Information Service
- Job-Seeking Services
- Eures Employment Services.

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<sup>1</sup> Numminen, U., Jankko, T., Lyra-Katz, A., Nyholm, N., Siniharju, M. & Svedlin, R. 2002. Opinto-ohjauksen tila 2002. Opinto-ohjauksen arviointi perusopetuksessa, lukiossa ja ammatillisessa koulutuksessa [State of educational guidance in 2002. An evaluation of educational guidance and counselling in basic education, general upper secondary school and vocational upper secondary education]. Arviointi 8/2002. Helsinki, Finland: Opetushallitus.

A customer feedback survey on main PES services (ASPA), including guidance services was carried out in 2004. The target of the survey is to study the different customer groups' experiences of the services they had taken part in at the Employment offices; the general quality of services, the access to services and the feedback on different factors of services as well as the monitoring of the development of customer satisfaction from year to year in order to find out the strengths and to distribute the good working practices. The ASPA results have been systematically used at all levels of the organization for strategic planning and improvements of PES services.

*Assessing a service need* is based on interaction between the employment official and the customer and on their joint conclusions. The assessment is created in the form a summation of information during discussions. What are the skills and competencies of the customer, the customer's wishes and possible feedback from cooperation parties. The official and customer assess the overall picture that has been created of the customer's situation in relation to the labour market's skill requirements, the demand for labour and the services at the employment office.

The life situation of the client, job-seeking skills, strengths, health, motivation, possibilities and readiness to make changes and factors that may restrict their possibilities and targets has to be taken into account. The services provided for individual customers at an employment office have been divided into six groups:

- Services for start-up entrepreneurs
- Information services
- Job-seeking services
- Vocational guidance services
- Services developing working-life capabilities
- Services linked with cooperation with other actors (social welfare, health care, mental health services, probation and after-care for prisoners and ex-prisoners etc. services and services at a labour service centre/citizen's services and rehabilitative work)
- Service need not defined (people whose service need cannot or does not need to be defined more precisely and
- No suitable service on offer at this moment

Since the 1980's the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour have established active national working groups with a broad membership including the social partners. The groups have representatives from both ministries, the Finnish National Board of Education, professional organisations, regional labour and educational administration, student organisations and social partners. The groups have been acting as national forums and given proposal to improve the national guidance policies. In addition to the overall guidance provision the recent groups have been focusing on the issues related to transition from comprehensive education to secondary education, transition from education to labour market and adult guidance.

A recent national initiative is a research and development centre for lifelong guidance at the Jyväskylä University. The goal is to create a research & training network that focuses specifically on career guidance issues in order to strengthen the evidence base required to inform policy development. The centre focuses on the challenges identified in national educational and labour market policies and in the Resolution of lifelong guidance adopted by the EU ministers of education in 2004. The centre comprises of the existing guidance expertise from different disciplines and research units of the university and regional institutions. The steering group of the centre has representatives of the network members and relevant national ministries. The centre will act as the national focal point for the ICCDPP.





# India

**Topic covered:**

Human capital

**Prepared by:**

Glenn Christo  
Martin Luther University

**Topic covered:**

Employability skills

**Prepared by:**

Dr. Gideon Arulmani  
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## India's Human Capital

### 1. India's Edge in Human Capital

India's scientific and technical manpower numbers over three million. These include over 800,000 scientists with postgraduate degrees in science. There are 400,000 doctors and 300,000 graduates in agriculture and veterinary sciences. Apart from engineers with degrees there are 718,000 with vocational technical diplomas. More than 50,000 computer professionals and 360,000 engineers graduate each year.

### 2. Boom in New Economy Jobs

The New Economy is defined by Wikipedia Encyclopedia as "The evolution from an industrial-manufacturing economy into a high technology-based economy, arising from new developments in the Internet, telecommunications and computer sectors." Certain occupations are considered as characteristic of the New Economy. These sectors have grown substantially in India and projections for new jobs in 2005 are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. New Economy Job Projections 2005**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Ma Foi Consultants</i>	<i>India Today</i>
IT/ITES*	1,00,000	2,75,000
Telecom	25,000	90,000
Financial	30,000	75,000
Biotech	50,000	
Textiles/garments		2,00,000
Retail	35,000	50,000
Auto/ancillary	70,000	

### 3. Career Guidance is Almost Non-Existent

Our school children peer into the bleak higher education landscape with bewildered eyes. The job market of the New Economy offers a seducing array of opportunities and thousands of school-leavers apply for the Indian Institutes of Technology (academies of excellence) in the hope of getting a prestigious and high-paying job. Attending a traditional university is almost a last resort. Vocational training is linked to low prestige and therefore is not the popular option. A recent study (WORCC-IRS, 2006) reveals, not surprisingly, that the top three occupations in terms of prestige are: scientist, computer scientist and engineer, but that there is little correlation between preferences for these careers and personal interest, knowledge of those careers or feelings of self-efficacy.

Little thought is given to career or personal development. What passes as career guidance is slanted towards commercial interests such as admission to private high-fee institutes and is provided by the institutes themselves or by self-styled 'counselling' organizations, which are often recruiting agencies for private colleges or industry. These 'career guidance' institutes supposedly prepare students for a career by teaching communication skills, personality development and how to write a resume, perform in an interview and other job-seeking skills.

### 4. The Mismatch Between Higher Education and the Job Market

For all the hype about India's rise as an Information Age power, the quality of our universities remains abysmally low. Only two Indian universities find a place in the global top 500. The vastness of India's higher education system is often cited and its huge pool of technical manpower often quoted. But behind these impressive figures lurk the grim realities. Less than 7% of college age youth (18-23 years) are in college and there is no hope of raising this to 10% by 2007, which is the main objective in higher education of the Tenth Five-Year Plan. The tertiary-enrolment ratio in India is contrastingly low even when compared with other Asian countries such as the Philippines (38.0%), South Korea (31.6%) and Thailand (19.6%) (2). Today there are an estimated 5.3 million unemployed graduates, left behind by the increasingly stringent demands of the technology-driven New Economy.

University education, except for a handful of noteworthy exceptions, has failed our students. The suitability of university graduates in low-wage countries was the subject of a McKinsey Global Institute study in 2004. Only a small fraction (25%) of Indian graduates in Business Management, Information Technology and Engineering were found to be suitable for employment. The study described the following reasons for the low quality of Indian graduates:

- Low quality of education in a large number of colleges of higher education
- Lack of necessary language and communication skills
- Lack of cultural fit
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Attitudes to work
  - Team spirit

Indian industry is not waiting for higher education to get its act together. Industry-oriented non-degree education is flourishing. There are innumerable computer institutes, some operating on a large and profitable scale, which also have centres in other countries. Many universities, both public and private, offer distance education in New Economy disciplines through commercial franchises. Several Multi National Companies such as Microsoft, Intel and Cisco offer certifications that enhance the resumes of job-seekers. Industry itself offers in-house training for new entrants. Some of these courses are six months long and offer cutting-edge hands-on skills. But these courses are geared to industry needs and little thought is given to the all-round or long-term development of the individual.

## **5. The Role of the Stakeholders**

The government, schools, universities and industry are the major stakeholders. But none of them have addressed the need for career guidance in a substantial manner. As career guidance services are closely related to economic development, the government of India should intensify efforts to establish a national policy for career guidance. At present, a few bits and pieces are provided through sporadic programs of the Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and non-governmental initiatives such as that of The Promise Foundation in South India. The Mudaliar Education Commission in 1953 recommended the training and appointment of guidance officers and career masters for all secondary schools and guidance bureaus were set up in 23 states, but the state guidance agencies are hardly active.

Apart from NCERT, 12 universities offer diploma programs in career guidance and counseling. The impact of these courses has not yet been evaluated. A few private colleges offer career management seminars for its students.

Industry has not yet assumed a role in career guidance, apart from the career development of its employees.

Career counseling that is tailored to the needs of Indian young people would make a significant contribution to maximising the tremendous human resource potential present in this vast subcontinent.

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## About the author:

*Prof. Glenn Christo*, a medical doctor and an expert in public health, has over two decades of experience in higher education and was until recently the Director of Planning of a deemed university and senior vice president of the Manipal Education and Medical Group. He is presently the Vice Chancellor, Martin Luther University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India.

## **Employability Skills**

***Gideon Arulmani***

### **1. Background to the Indian situation**

The tremendous changes in the world of work, place a high degree of pressure on the Indian young person to make effective career choices. Yet, theoretically sound, culturally and psychologically validated, services to support career development do not seem to be available for large scale use in the Indian situation. It was highlighted at the recently held National Consultation on Career Psychology (2006, Bangalore, India) that there is presently no clear policy perspective pertaining to career guidance and counselling as public service.

A further factor to be considered in the Indian situation is that the term 'career' is often related to something that only the 'rich' can afford and is dismissed as being irrelevant to the needs of those who are disadvantaged and living in poverty. It is important that career development services are defined within the multiple realities and paradoxes that compose the Indian situation. We, at The Promise Foundation, have attempted to highlight its crosscutting relevance to all sections of a population by describing it to mean livelihood, occupation, vocation or in its most simple sense: a *suitable* job.

It is essential that these factors are taken into consideration when discussing 'career development and public policy', particularly for the Indian context.

In an attempt to document the factors that influence the Indian adolescent's orientation to work, livelihood and career, a survey was recently conducted in 15 Indian regions (WORCC-IRS, 2006). Some of the findings of this survey will be drawn into the following discussion.

The emphasis of the points presented below would be on young people preparing to enter the world of work rather than adults who are already working.

### **2. The Availability and Relevance of Career Development Services**

WORCC-IRS assessed the availability of opportunities for career preparation to the sample under study. Career preparation in this context included opportunities to learn about self, understand the world of work, develop a career plan and develop skills to manage one's career development. Irrespective of school type or socio-economic status, 77% of the WORCC-IRS sample indicated that they had had no formal opportunities to acquire skills for career preparation.

In situations where such opportunities were available, negativity in career beliefs, perception of career barriers as insurmountable and career decision making difficulties were lower. Likewise, career awareness, self-efficacy to overcome barriers and readiness to make career decisions were significantly higher. While causality cannot be assumed from this data, the possibility is strong that a career development service could reduce negativity in career beliefs, mitigate the perception of barriers as insurmountable, increase career awareness, sharpen skills for career decision making and ultimately enhance career self-management skills in young people.

### **3. Promoting Employability and Career Self-management Skills: Policy and Practice**

India is urgently in need of a model for career counselling that could inform both policy and practice. Such a model would provide a clear indication of the nature of the impact of psychological, socio-cultural, socio-economic and educational factors on career development behaviour. It is also essential that this model is a dynamic one and constantly remains pertinent to labour market trends. This framework would guide the development of counselling techniques, psychometric devices and the standardisation of intervention techniques, including a system for categorising and updating careers information. An effective intervention would necessarily be able to accommodate the demands imposed by age, language, cultural difference, socio-economic status, disadvantage and deprivation, special needs and similar variations.

#### **4. Capacity Building for the Delivery of Career Development Services**

'Counselling' and 'guidance' are terms that are loosely used in India and these services could be offered by anyone at all. Most often, well-intentioned individuals, social service clubs and others who are 'interested in youth' assume the role of career counsellors. In the school / college context, career counselling is a responsibility commonly carried by the teacher deputed to be the student welfare officer.

It is essential that aspects related to capacity building for the delivery of career development services are addressed. Given resource limitations, the important question of whether career counselling could be a role or a profession must be discussed. Guidelines on whom to train, levels of qualifications and modalities for training must be formulated.

An important finding from the WORCC-IRS is that family members (e.g. parents, older siblings) seemed to be the main support available to the young person for career preparation. Programmes that build and sharpen the careers awareness of this group could create a resource within the family that could support the career development of the young within that family.

Finally, it must be noted that the recommendations of commissions in the 1960s have provided an organisational structure for the delivery of career development services through government agencies such as the Central and State Bureaux of Guidance. However Government sponsored guidance services have not been able to make much headway – the reasons cited being the paucity of funds and the lukewarm attitude towards guidance on the part of state and central educational authorities. While the present situation is rather dismal, this organisational structure provides a good starting point and could be revived with little effort and expense. The functioning of these organisations could be reviewed, their infrastructure strengthened and the skills of personnel upgraded. Provisions could be made for the forging of links between these organisations and the educational system for the delivery of career development services.

*"I don't want to be a just a human being who is born, grows and dies without leaving any mark of her living. My dream is to do something useful and important. I only have my strength and my intelligence for this. I will work hard and do it."* These words of a 15 year old girl from an extremely poor home, reveal that the absence of supports for career development does not dim the excitement that young people have about their futures. It is urgent that the 'system' seems concerns itself with creating well formulated supports that could channel this enthusiasm toward effective career choices.

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#### **About the author:**

*Dr. Gideon Arulmani*, a clinical psychologist, holds a doctoral degree in Career Psychology from the University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom. As the founder and managing trustee of The Promise Foundation, a charitable trust, his concerns are linked to applying the behavioural sciences to address the problems of socio-economic disadvantage and poverty. He has been researching a model of career counselling for the Indian context and has developed a number of applications related to guidance and counselling. He has been recently invited to join the NICEC network (UK) as an international fellow.



# Ireland

## **Topics covered:**

Labour supply

Employability skills

The information base for public policy making

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## Theme: Labour Supply

### Increasing Labour Force Participation

Ireland's economic and labour market environment has changed dramatically over the past decade. Unprecedented levels of economic growth have led to a rapid expansion in employment. In the past eight years alone, employment grew by 35% and unemployment is now the lowest in Europe. Meeting the growth in demand for labour has given added urgency to national efforts to increase labour force participation. Government has responded by increasing investment in measures aimed at stimulating this increased participation, particularly among groups previously under-represented in the world of work.

At the same time, our economy is becoming progressively more knowledge-based. Meeting the consequential demand for higher-level skills is an increasingly important objective in national educational and labour market policies. Efforts are being made to consistently up-skill the labour force, including those already in employment, through the promotion of a culture of life-long education and training.

Career guidance has a significant contribution to make in achieving the twin objectives of increasing labour supply and upskilling the existing workforce so that it can adapt to evolving skill requirements. Having access to a range of guidance services throughout their working lives helps individuals make informed choices about their future career development. It can also provide them with the confidence to avail of the learning and occupational opportunities necessary to allow them grow towards their full potential. This has obvious benefits for the individual but it also benefits society and the economy by increasing the pool of talents and skills available in the labour force.

### Career development for target groups

Career guidance can best contribute to facilitating jobseekers enter, or re-enter, the labour market when it is supplemented with other career development services, including access to occupation-related training opportunities and job placement services. In Ireland, a range of such services are provided by **FÁS** (Foras Áiseanna Saothair), Ireland's vocational training and employment authority.

Individuals wishing to enter the labour market or change employment can avail of these services by self-referring to FÁS. Others may be referred by the Department of Social and Family Affairs (the Government department responsible for social welfare schemes and services) under the **Preventive Strategy** outlined below. Regardless of their means of referral, FÁS Employment Service Officers interview each new client. This interview incorporates career guidance services such as advice, support and information on training and employment opportunities. This process allows the client to agree an action plan that identifies any training or education needs pre-requisite to gaining employment in his or her chosen field.

Certain categories of job-seeker require targeted career development initiatives to help them reach their full potential in the labour market. These groups are given priority access to FÁS services and include those who have been unemployed for longer than six months, older workers, women returning to the workforce, lone parents and people with a disability. Some examples of specific measures to develop the employability of the groups are now briefly outlined.

- The **Preventive Strategy** aims to stem the flow into long periods of unemployment. Under this, FÁS actively engages with individuals when they exceed six months on the Live Register. Special funding is also available to support the particular needs of the 5% of these clients who, in the course of their guidance interviews, are identified as having special barriers that need to be overcome before the client is ready to progress to open training or employment. Proposals are in train to roll the Preventive Strategy process out to older workers.
- **Expanding the Workforce Initiative (ETW)** is a FÁS project which proactively encourages women to return to the workforce. Support, including on-the-job training is offered to women returners in a flexible manner. The ease of access to this programme has been an important factor

in its success to date. The greatest employability needs identified for ETW participants are in the areas of personal development and job-seeking skills. For this reason, a Pre-Employment Preparation Programme has been introduced as part of the ETW initiative to provide participants with essential labour market skills. Specific attention is given under ETW to lone parents, the majority of whom are women.

- There are **targeted interventions for people with disabilities** who require special assistance in accessing careers that match their skills and talents. FÁS operates a range of targeted career services for clients who have difficulty availing of mainstream training. For example, specialist providers deliver vocational training and mentoring services to persons requiring additional supports during their training. Other practical supports available to promote career development for this group include workplace equipment/adaptation grants and personal interview interpreter grants. A Wage Subsidy Scheme is also available to employers to further help people with disabilities make the transition into careers in mainstream employment.

### **Meeting the challenge of skills shortages**

- **Careers development information/guidance**

Skills shortages in the economy can present exciting and rewarding career opportunities for citizens. Individuals can be encouraged to consider careers in these areas by making them aware of the career opportunities that will arise in the future and of the learning paths to acquire the skills necessary for these occupations.

Career guidance practitioners can serve their clients well by providing them with information and by assisting them explore their suitability and interest in occupations currently experiencing skills shortages. To do this, it is essential that guidance professionals have access to up-to-date information on labour market developments and on the ever-expanding range of education and training opportunities.

Responsibility for identifying the supply and demand for skills in individual business sectors and occupations and for making recommendations for averting any anticipated mismatches belongs to the Government-appointed **Expert Group of Future Skills Needs (EGFSN)**. This Group's published recommendations strongly influence national skills development policy; for example, its recommendations at the beginning of this millennium about skills shortages in the ICT sector led to a range of Government actions including increasing the numbers of ICT student places in third level institutions, measures to reduce drop-out levels among ICT students and the introduction of a specific programme to increase ICT skills among the employed.

However, there is a concern that while there is great interest in formal labour market information in Ireland, its style of presentation is more geared towards the needs of policy and academic audiences. There is an acceptance that the wider public needs access to information in a more user-friendly format to support their making informed career and learning choices.

To address this need, the two Government Departments with responsibility for labour market policy and education (the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Department of Education and Science) are currently preparing a proposal that will improve the delivery of career-related information. The intention is that the information will be available electronically on a central Irish careers portal, with links to other appropriate sources of information. This portal will provide accessible up-to-date information on existing and forecasted demand for skills within the economy, together with learning opportunities available in Ireland.

- **Career development through upskilling**

Career development through upskilling also has an important role to play in reducing skill shortages. Ireland's evolution as a knowledge-based economy, coupled with the fact that the majority of the 2020 workforce are already working today, makes the ongoing training of those in employment all the more

important. Ireland recently significantly expanded its investments in the skills development of the employed through a variety of initiatives, most of which are co-funded by the private sector.

The largest programme in this area is FÁS **One Step Up** initiative. This seeks to increase skills levels among the employed through a variety of mechanisms, one of which involves FÁS entering into strategic alliances with representative groups and educational bodies to finance agreed training programmes. The training delivered focuses on three areas of identified need, viz:

- basic skills provision for the low skilled employees
- occupational-specific upskilling for staff in certain sectors
- management and entrepreneurial development.

The initiative also attracts private sector investment.

Another significant programme in this area is **Skillnets** which is grant aided by the Government. This aims to increase enterprise participation in training to improve competitiveness and to enhance workers employability. The distinguishing features of the scheme are that it is enterprise-led and it encourages groups of companies to identify their employees' skills development needs and to address these through training networks, rather than an individual company approach.

### **Theme: Employability skills**

#### **How effectively do career development services help to develop employability and career self-management skills in young people, the workforce of the future?**

Ireland participated in the OECD's comparative review of national policies for career information, guidance and counselling services. A country note (dated April 2002) which documents the findings of the reviewers and suggestions/recommendations for the further development of the guidance services in Ireland is available on [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

It is intended to concentrate the responses to the theme on second level and adult guidance services, as these sectors provide greatest scope for the development of guidance programmes. Career guidance in the third level sector is more focused on the provision of information and facilitating placements.

### **Guidance in second level education**

#### **Current policy**

In Ireland, young people commence second level education at approximately 12 years of age and complete after five or six years (one year is optional). The Education Act 1998, requires second level schools to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices. All second level schools receive resources from the Department of Education and Science for the provision of guidance to their students.

Since receiving the OECD's country note in 2002, the Department of Education and Science (DES) has implemented a number of system initiatives to provide for an improved guidance and counselling service for second level students.

The Inspectorate of the DES produced guidelines for schools to assist them in fulfilling their statutory obligation to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance. The guidelines include the following definition of guidance:

*Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.*

In September 2005, most second level schools with a student enrolment of 200 or more, received additional resources from the Department of Education and Science for guidance. Schools were asked by the Department to utilise, as far as possible, the additional guidance allocation to focus on guidance

provision at junior cycle (lower secondary). The imbalance of guidance service provision between junior cycle and senior cycle (upper secondary) has been highlighted in a number of audits of guidance in second level schools and was one of the issues identified for consideration in the OECD country note.

Schools are expected to develop a guidance plan as part of their whole school plan, the latter being a statutory requirement under the Education Act 1998. Guidelines have been developed by the **National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)** to assist schools in developing their guidance plan and the Centre also provides training on guidance planning through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Research conducted from 2003 to 2005 has provided the Department of Education and Science with comprehensive data on the use by schools of the resources provided for guidance, on the focus and content of guidance programmes and the beneficiaries of these programmes. This work has also identified the gaps in the service, the barriers to be overcome in ensuring a more effective delivery of the service and the perceptions of principals, guidance counsellors, students, parents and other stakeholders in relation to the guidance service in second level schools.

Guidance is now inspected by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science in the same way as all other curricular subjects in second level schools are. Since 2001, approximately 170 inspections have been carried out. A focus on Guidance is also included in Whole School Evaluations which are conducted by the Inspectorate

The **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)**, the statutory body that advises the Minister for Education and Science on curriculum and assessment, is currently developing a draft curriculum framework for Guidance. The framework will reflect the importance of a balanced approach to guidance provision, in terms of the coverage of a broad range of topics and skills and in terms of student access to guidance across all the years of second level education.

## Programmes

In 2001, a new initiative, the **Guidance Enhancement Initiative (GEI)**, was introduced to build on existing provision of guidance in second level schools. This initiative, instead of providing resources to all schools, involved inviting schools to submit proposals to a competitive process. Schools were provided with three strands under which to develop proposals, via:

- developing links between schools and industry, local agencies and the community
- increasing the uptake of science subjects to the end of upper secondary
- increasing retention rates to the end of upper secondary

Just under 25% of second level schools received resources under the initiative to implement their proposals. Evidence from inspections and a review of guidance carried out over 2003-2005 points to the success of the GEI, for example, it was found that:

- schools in the initiative were implementing more targeted and focused guidance interventions that were developmental in nature and linked to the wider community and world of work
- the initiative has encouraged schools to create new guidance programmes in junior cycle that will assist their students in developing self-management skills
- the focus on increasing the up-take of science subjects, coupled with links to industry, provided students with first hand experience of the kinds of career opportunities that exist in this fast growing sector in Ireland.

The OECD country note referred to the *three attractive and well designed modules* that are available to students taking particular upper secondary programmes. These modules aim to help students become more aware of their interests, aptitudes and skills with regard to the world of work as well as providing

them with a general knowledge of the world of work, career research and job search skills. Approximately 37% of all senior cycle students opt for the programmes that include these modules.

The Department of Education and Science has funded the development of an information website for learners, **Qualifax**, that provides up-to-date information on every course (third level, further education, adult education) on the island of Ireland. Every course listed has a link to the website of the provider of the course. In the reference library of the website, there are links to approximately 400 education related websites both nationally and internationally. **Qualifax** has recently purchased the licence to include on its website, the interest inventory of the Australian My Future website.

The Transition Year (TY) is an optional year for second level students between the completion of junior cycle and the commencement of senior cycle. Its aim is to provide students with opportunities to develop personal, social and vocational skills and to learn to take greater responsibility for their own learning and decision-making. Schools are free to determine their curriculum for TY in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Science. In recognition that the objectives of the **Be Real Game** of the **Real Game** series are in line with those of the TY, the materials are being adapted for the Irish situation and will be available to schools in September 2006. Through this programme, students learn career management competencies by applying them in role-playing simulations that take them to the future and back. The objective is that they return to the present with enhanced career management competencies and a much better appreciation for how they can realise their dreams.

### **Barriers and challenges**

One barrier to the implementation of developmental guidance programmes in second level education relates to difficulties in moving from the traditional model of guidance delivery in schools. School principals, and guidance counsellors themselves, tend to perceive their role mainly as facilitating senior cycle students in making once-off educational or career choices through a process that is highly dependent on one-to-one interviews. The investment of current available resources for guidance in this work limits schools' capacity to provide a service in the junior cycle where the need for programmes in the development of self-management skills is strong.

The training courses for guidance counsellors in Ireland include a significant component on personal counselling theory, skills development and practice as well as career guidance. A consequence of this strong emphasis on personal counselling is that many practitioners see this as an essential support for students, not just at times of crisis but in assisting them in decision-making and obtaining information. Research findings indicate that principals also consider personal counselling to be one of the strengths of the guidance service in schools. It is fully accepted by all that the provision of counselling support to students is an integral component of guidance. However, schools need to become more aware that time spent in one-to-one counselling impacts adversely on the school's capacity to provide the class-based programmes and group activities that all students are entitled to. Therefore, the use of one-to-one counselling should be reserved for circumstances where other more student-empowering approaches cannot be used.

Another barrier is that many schools are not providing students with sufficient access to ICT for guidance purposes. The recent connection of all schools to broadband will hopefully improve the access to relevant information and, in particular, to the **Qualifax** website.

The student population in Ireland is becoming increasingly more diverse. Students with disabilities, special needs and from ethnic minority groups are now attending second level schools in large numbers. Recent research findings indicate that the provision of guidance to such students is not considered a priority by a majority of principals and that the involvement of guidance counsellors with these students is limited. A challenge, therefore, is to develop and deliver guidance programmes appropriate to the needs of particular groups of students within our schools.

The curriculum in second level schools in Ireland is examination-driven. Students sit a State examination at the end of junior cycle (Junior Certificate) and on completion of the senior cycle (Leaving Certificate). The level of success achieved in the Leaving Certificate examination determines entry to higher level education. As a consequence, non-examinable areas of the curriculum, such as guidance, can be perceived as somewhat less important and can be either squeezed out or not taken seriously by many students and even by some parents.

There is a lack of understanding among some schools, parents, students and other stakeholders as to what to expect from the guidance service. Evidence shows that less than 40% of schools have a written guidance plan and in many schools the guidance delivery is determined by immediate needs. Typically, when a crisis arises in a school, the guidance counsellor is seen as the person who will deal with it. Often, this means that other planned guidance activities therefore are pushed aside so as to allow the guidance counsellor to “fix” the problem.

In research conducted with schools over the last two years, inadequate resourcing by the State was identified as a barrier to meeting the guidance needs of all students.

### **Adult Guidance**

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment funds guidance services for adults through FÁS (see separate Theme on Labour Supply).

Within the education system, an initiative the **Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI)** was launched on a pilot basis in 2001 by the Department of Education and Science. The AEGI is aimed at adults who are availing of specific second-chance educational programmes and offers information, advice and guidance on a one-to-one and group basis to help participants make the best possible choices for learning. The needs of the client groups covered by this initiative are diverse as many have left school early and most have never had access to any form of skills training.

The challenges for developing the employability skills of the AEGI client group differ considerably from those that apply to the school-going population. Many do not have literacy skills and some have poor personal and social skills leading to low self esteem and a lack of confidence. The priorities for targeting these adults include the provision of advice on learning opportunities, progression routes, training in study skills, provision of vocational and career information and/or referral to other support services (e.g. welfare, health) as required. The aim is to assist clients in developing their personal, social and employability skills so that they can gain independence by obtaining appropriate employment.

### **Theme: The information base for public policy making**

#### **What do we now know?**

The Guidance and Counselling service in education in Ireland is best described as based on traditional paradigm thinking which views career choice as a once-in-a-lifetime decision, taken towards the end of second level schooling. Where an individual leaves formal education prior to completing second level education, the service model is effectively remedial in nature. Individuals who are early school leavers, still of teenage years, may be eligible to avail of provision in **Youthreach**<sup>2</sup> and adults who has decided to re-engage in education, may be able to access support under the **Adult Educational Guidance Initiative** (see separate Theme on Employability Skills).

Because of this traditional paradigm thinking, guidance practitioners tend to see their role as facilitating the individual's once-off life-directing career decision through the vocational, occupational, training or college choice process that occurs at the end of formal second level education. This means that service provision in schools is concentrated in the final two years of second level education. The adult educational guidance service focuses on re-integrating those who have not have a positive experience of

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<sup>2</sup> Youthreach is a state-funded second chance education programme aimed at young people aged between 15 and 20 years of age, who have left school without any formal qualifications

first and second level education back into the adult education structure, so that they can have the career choice options they would have enjoyed had they successfully engaged with first and second level education in the first place.

While the traditional paradigm has served Ireland well in the past, the rapidly developing economy coupled with changes in societal structures and values demands that a professional guidance and counselling service be available to all individuals throughout their life span. Such a service is required particularly because of the constantly changing nature of the skills and competencies that individuals need in order to secure and maintain productive and personally satisfying employment throughout their working life.

Adopting new paradigm thinking, will require a major rethink of the relationships between Government departments, particularly in the areas of education and employment. These fields of public policy have traditionally operated more or less independently of each other. However, a process of inter-departmental cooperation has now started and an exploration of the policy implications of this is currently underway. One such outcome has been the realisation that the public need easily accessible information on education and labour market opportunities, along with accessible guidance and counselling services, to enable individuals to explore the implications of the information provided for their personal, social and career development. There is recognition that the private sector has a significant role to play in this regard.

The Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment Mr. Michael Martin stated on the 25th February 2006:

*I think that we do therefore need to look at our existing information delivery channels, regarding learning and vocational training options to see whether there are gaps and whether there is a need for greater coordination. Towards this end, both the Department of Education and Science and my own Department are working together to give effect to the recommendation of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning for a National Learning Line. This National Learning Line will effectively provide a one-stop shop for learning and vocational training opportunities.*

The Minister went on to say that, with proper planning and by learning from the experiences of those other countries where guidance and labour market information systems have been developed to high quality, there is a high level of confidence that the proposed national learning line will quickly become a valuable, valued and a well-utilised public service.

It is intended that the national learning line will bring together the disparate range of information sources currently in operation across the education and employment sectors. In addition to a focus on progression options within the public educational and training system, it is intended that the national learning line will include up-dated labour market information and data to give people insights into the employment prospects in the different sectors of our own economy. The system will also provide information in relation to employment prospects in the rest of Europe.

### **What else is needed from the stakeholder's perspective?**

Alongside a national learning line, there is also a need for user-friendly, easily accessible, publicly available career guidance and counselling services that can support the ongoing career development needs of all individuals, and not just those in specifically targeted groups such as the currently unemployed or those in economically vulnerable sectors of the economy. These services should be developed and delivered so as to ensure that the needs of individuals at all life stages are recognised and that cognisance is taken of the particular needs of the various social, cultural and ethnic communities that exist in Ireland today.

The potential client groups for the aforementioned services are many and varied. They span the long term unemployed, individuals with high levels of education and training who are looking for a new career pathway in mid-life and older people who wish to modify their career activity without withdrawing completely from the economically active labour force, to mention but some. It is important that the range of services offered to the public takes account of the capacity of the individual to pay for the services received. By adopting this model of development, the services could be financially sustainable into the long term.

## **How do we get there?**

It is clear that Ireland needs to develop a comprehensive educational and career opportunities website. It also needs appropriate professional guidance and counselling services to assist individuals in their career-related decision-making. Intensive effort needs to be invested in shifting public thinking from seeing career decision-making as a once-in-a-lifetime event to being a lifelong life-wide developmental process.

The findings of the OECD review support a case for reviewing the structure of guidance and counselling training programmes. A shift towards more holistic training programmes that would prepare practitioners to deliver services to all individuals would greatly facilitate practitioners in providing a service matched to today's needs, particularly in school settings. A development that may need to be considered is that guidance and counselling training programmes would be modular in nature, allowing all practitioners to study a common core of competencies, followed by a number of modules targeted at specific client groups. Such a training structure would allow practitioners to return to training, if they wished to switch their client focus, and undertake the modules required. The **National Guidance Forum**, established as a joint initiative by the Department of Education and Science and The Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, is currently considering the competencies practitioners should have.

## **To what extent are we learning to base our service models on evidence from research?**

The two aforementioned Government departments have engaged in extensive research of Ireland's current guidance services and future needs.

The Department of Education and Science has recently completed a "top to bottom" review of guidance in second level schools with research carried out between the autumn of 2003 and the spring of 2005. That Department is reviewing on an ongoing basis, the development and usage of the services provided under the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative.

The Expert Skills Group on Future Skills Needs (ESGFSN) will shortly publish the findings of a research project on the information needs of those making career decisions. This study was undertaken in the context of the importance, for both adults and those at school and in college, of having good information on where career opportunities currently exist, and where they will arise in the future.

The National Guidance Forum is currently engaged in a major research project to chart a path forward in creating a comprehensive lifelong life-wide service in Ireland.

## **Is this how we begin to move from a supply-based to a demand-based delivery system?**

The work undertaken to date by the National Guidance Forum and by the two relevant Government departments suggests that the strategies outlined above will result in significant progress towards moving Ireland from a service model, revolving around a once-in-a-lifetime decision provided at times of the State's choosing, to one that will be responsive to the ongoing education, training and career development needs of the entire population.





# Italy

## **Topics covered:**

Career development services for workforce development  
Older workers

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## Obstacles and Strategies

### 1. Career development services for workforce development –The Italian debate

Supporting career development and workforce development through career counselling and guidance is part of the Italian human resources development policy. The strategy involves enhancing competitiveness and the quality of the workforce as well as encouraging the inactive to integrate into the labour market. Guidance and counselling services, which are free of charge and allow free access to all, are seen as preventive measures to combat unemployment. They aim at discouraging young people from leaving education early, facilitating the transition from one educational pathway to the other as well as the integration of groups at risk into education, training and employment and at rising employability, specially for disadvantaged categories like young people, women and older workers. There are a number of actors involved in the delivery of career and workforce development in Italy, e.g. schools, training centres, employment centres and so on.

As far as the employment centres, the public employment services reform started from 1997 has completely changed the previous job placement system, transferring the competencies of Employment Politics and of the organisation of public employment services to the Regions and Provinces. The public employment services (PES) system has represented, since its establishments, an institutional point of reference for citizens and businesses alike. However, although the situation has changed considerably and the PES are now controlled by local Bodies, in the majority of cases the knowledge of these structures precedes the changes and it is in part still incorporated within the old job centres. In recent years, PES have been a target of constant testing and monitoring both on a national and regional level and notwithstanding the results of the different researches, it is difficult to define how the career development services, that is to say the guidance services, within the PES of the different provinces is structured. Even if the employment services reform, changing completely in its philosophy and organisation the previous employment system, has introduced functions such as:

- a) personalised information operations;
- b) operations to support the access into the world of employment (guidance interviews, according to the L.d. 181, directed towards the monitoring of the unemployment conditions, workshops of job searching skills, introduction to work course, stages, etc.);
- c) operations to support vocational/professional development through first class orientation/guidance activities and, in some centres, courses for competences balance.
- d)

While the “**Masterplan**” of the employment services has outlined the timeframes, the procedures, the evaluation standards of the entire reform process, and the resources to be supplied on a standard basis by the services within 2003, and on an advanced basis within 2006 across the whole national territory (the regional Master plans have been prepared in connection with this document)<sup>3</sup>.

Currently, there is a growing discussion in Italy whether the established public organisations may reach the relevant people in need of counselling services and in particular career development. The Italian employment services provide basically career development services for all the citizens, specially unemployed, while there is a growing need to include also the employed citizens in the guidance services. Some of the last researches in this field have pointed out that the indifferenced approach to customers, that characterised the old placement structures, is being substituted by an approach oriented to address specific interventions according to different users typologies, by enhancing and exploiting any investment of the past, most of all the ones relative to guidance and counselling services.

One of the most relevant weakness point is represented by the necessity to turn users requirement into an effective supply of specific services. This step is subject to various conditioning, such

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<sup>3</sup> The creation of a “masterplan” for employment services has been necessary to set up a reference frame in which developing the reform of the SPI. The logic of the masterplan is to agree shared quantitative objectives and functional qualitative standards, fixing in a precise time frame the achievement of a measurable efficiency.

as the different visibility of variables according to geographical areas or the structure capacity to react to. The latter one seems conditioned, on its turn, by the organising capacities of the Employment Centres (Centri per l'Impiego –CPI) and of provincial and regional systems supervising their activities, in the framework of a system based on subsidiary relationships among various administrative levels, characterised by strong differences. These relationships seem to be conditioned also by the capacity to create networking on account of PES structures. As far as the services provided, the PES have not only the task to match job demand and supply, in fact, they have to offer a wide range of interventions that include not only career guidance per se, but also elements that may be related to career guidance, such as personalised job-search assistance and active measures such as connection to vocational training centres<sup>4</sup>.

As part of the effort to modernise the PES both the personalisation of services and the customer motivation gain particular importance. The latter means emphasising the enhancement of autonomy and “*empowerment*” of the customer. The challenge is to offer services that respond to the users needs. So when we look at career development strategies within PES we focus our attention on the distinct aspects of the services offered to individuals and specially to the followings: personalisation of services, attention paid to assessing the individual’s skills and competences, attention paid on long-term career strategies and to helping individuals to develop personal action plans. At present, in Italy the attention is put on the first two aspects, while we believe that it will be increasingly important “seeking to assure not only the immediate employment of job-seekers, but also their future employability<sup>5</sup>”. A good idea would be to plan assessments and evaluations of the services provided within the employment services, specially of the counselling system. Moreover, we have also to bear in mind that there is a predominant role of public agencies that provide counselling and lifelong guidance, while the reliance on private agencies in this field is not strongly developed.

Although, given the relatively recently put into force of new regulation of employment services, at the moment it is difficult to present the effects of the reform and shedding key-aspects concerning private operators authorised by the newly-entered reform to supply different services to different typologies of clients. Anyway, private services exist, they focus on job brokerage, matching demand and supply and outplacement of unemployed people, and only rarely do they offer guidance for career and workforce development to a broad range of users. It would be good to develop also “guidance-like” services and to reflect on the forms of interaction and co-operation between private operators and the public employment services system focusing on foreseeable trends of evolution. Italy’s challenge is to enhance the capacity of the two information system (public and private) to interact with each other, which has so far attained a rather weak level even if still in progress. Its ultimate goal is to reduce or, at least, smoothing the so-called “market failure” deriving from asymmetries of information, while the final goal, according to the spirit of the Reform, is the development of an effective “mixed” national network of employment and workforce development services for all categories of users.

The PES service model is largely based on multi-professional teams of employment advisers, counselling psychologist and social workers as well. *The multi-professionalism* of the provision of counselling services is one the current trends in Italy. Besides professional counsellors (mainly psychologists) also employment counsellors, employment advisers, social advisers, trainers at different levels of education and project workers do in fact, provide “counselling-like” services using and developing traditional or new counselling methods. The new situation does not develop necessarily smoothly. The development creates a challenge for the traditional counselling profession to re-position itself to the new situation. In fact, a relevant factor is represented by the effort in Italy to integrate the professional skills present in CPIs with consultants and guidance and client motivation abilities as well. From the organisational point of view an effective progress has concerned the planning of training and updating activities addressed to HR in CPIs. Starting from the analysis of the intervention strategies planned for each typology of client, training initiatives for HR have been processed to make up specific

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<sup>4</sup> To job-seekers should be offered access to effective and efficient measures to enhance their employability with special attention being given to people facing the greatest difficulties in the labour market.

<sup>5</sup> Job-brokering was the main task of the old Job Centres before the PES reform.

services addressed to each target. In this way HR training activities can produce system benefits, that could be used in the organisation and suitable projects supply.

Finally, as far as the funding system of the career development services, it should be noted that there exists a significant *world of projects* addressing guidance issues. In Italy, since joining the EU years ago thousands of projects under the umbrella of the ESF and its different programmes have developed counselling services for the unemployed, for the hard-to-place in the labour market and the disadvantaged groups. Like in other European Countries, the public bodies have used projects to enhance their development and also for acquiring extra funding, but the main problem is to monitor this funds.

## **2. Older workers - The Italian context**

Behind the current employment situation there are longer-term trends that affect also the context of career development and workforce development subsequently. First, Italy has to face in the forthcoming years the problem of the ageing workforce. Already now, the number of young people entering labour market falls below of those leaving the labour market. Second, and partly related to the first one, there is strong need for workplace development in order to enhance workforce to stay in working life and prevent employees from too early retirement. Third, and perhaps most importantly for career development, there is a growing need in the businesses for skilled labour force in order to improve and enhance their competitiveness in the global competition. Reflecting the above trends the priority should be given to implementing a coherent workforce development strategy to foster returning to education and increase participation in training, specially for low skilled and older workers. The issue of old workers has caused a sort of policy change in the political agenda of EU member countries, specially in Italy. Its fundamental steps could be find out both in social insurance policies and in labour policies. One point that should be noted, regarding policies to support the development of career in Italy and the role of career development in supporting workforce development, is that active labour market policies for a considerably period was focussed on meeting the needs of unemployed persons, specially young unemployed people. This has resulted in a relative lack of focus on persons in employment and specially on the older workforce. In the last years two specific Measures, “Lifelong Learning and Permanent Learning”, planned in the framework of Esf regional programming (2000/2006), have acquire a relevant development. At local level, they have created some territorial experiences, “micro” but relevant, even if the funds planned by most Administrations for lifelong and permanent learning seem rather limited, both form the point of view of the percentage rate out of the total of recourses co-financed by Esf and form the one relative to the incidence on the total of the active old workers in each regional area.

With relation to the national framework, the recently reform of the Labour Market has introduced deep innovations trough the reform and the creation of a number of “*flexible*” employment contracts, some of them useful for the employment problems of older workers. Despite of this, in Italy guidance activities for adult people is manly realised inside the PES where the complexity of the intervention on this target group is pinpointed. The complex nature of the adult population presents a range of challengers to policymakers who are trying to improve career development services, a good solution would be the creation of “dedicated desks for over 45” as well as a proper “task force” inside the CPI. At the same time, it is possible to identify some of the most promising and successful practices with relation to career development activities for older workers: strong connection of the actions to the local labour context; involvement of local representatives; networking of the bodies involved; integration among training, guidance, placement, mentoring and other activities; actions aimed to a “true” job insertion; not only individualised but personalised actions for ageing people; identification of specific methods for older workers. PES in Italy have a lead role in supporting older workers, yet career development services within them are undeveloped, in fact, to date policymakers have been slow to mobilise career development services to support active ageing.

Nowadays, the initiatives that Italy is promoting, at national level, to realize the European guidelines to enhance old workers employment, are different as well as the strategies that Italy is facing in order to reverse the trend towards early retirement. In fact, the attention is put on:

analysing the employment levels, the training initiatives role, the retirement system and the policies promoting the prolonging of active working life as well. Specially training actions are quite relevant to implement active ageing, in fact, senior workers with high qualifications show a double employment rate respect to workers of the same age with low qualifications.

Moreover it seems quite difficult to access to professional updating courses, owing to the low reactivity, on account of establishments, of investments in courses geared to workers next to retirement, together with the real difficulties to adapt to new technologies on account of old workers. The improvement of working setting, the introduction of flexible schedules to make easier the progressive passage to retirement, the reduction of difficulties to access to training courses, the elimination of discriminations due to the age; all of these represent some initiatives that could be promoted to implement senior employment. While currently older workers are very often placed in public utility sectors and only very few of them can take profit from professional updating courses.

## **Conclusions**

This paper leads to a conclusion that in tackling the problems related to career development and workforce development, Italy is very well aware of the problems currently faced by other Countries and itself: duplication of functions, insufficient work with employed people, absence of vocational guidance standards, insufficient funding, shortage of specially trained professionals, etc. Insufficient motivation for career development is most of all conditioned by insufficient awareness. That's why the need for career guidance is missing both among young individuals and adults. The need for career guidance, which should determine vocational training of a person in future, should be formed at school. Young individuals must learn to make use of this service and then it will be more attractive for them in elder age as well. Career guidance has been developed quite fragmentary so far and this badly limits the efficiency of this service as well as the influence thereof on formation of labour force quality. Regarding the large number of different institutions involved, most European countries feel that there is a lack of harmonisation between the services. The one-stop-shop could be an example of effective implementation avoiding too many actors.

Currently, there is a common understanding of the need to provide guidance services to individuals most disadvantaged on the labour market (e.g. early school leavers without qualifications, individuals from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and people who are not registered unemployed). Important is the co-operation between the different bodies at national but also at regional and local level in order to develop further the provision of guidance services to all targeted individuals.





# Latvia

**Topics covered:**

Employability skills

Career development services for workforce development

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Professional Career Counselling State Agency



## Employability skills – Latvia

Employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment. For the individual, employability depends on: their assets in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess; the way they use and deploy those assets; the way they present them to employers and the context (eg personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work.

The Ministry of Welfare (MoW) through its institutions - the State Employment Agency (SEA) and The Professional Career Counselling State Agency (PCCSA) –realizes policy for increasing adaptability of workforce? employability growth.

SEA provides different activities for enhancing employability skills of unemployed and job seekers. The directions of them are: providing work opportunity awareness, providing occupational training, re-training and raising qualification of unemployed, measures for disadvantaged groups of unemployed (subsidized work places, work practice, social enterprises for less competitive unemployed etc.), paid temporary public works and competitiveness raising measures for unemployed and job seekers. ESF National Programme “Support for Implementation of Active Labour Market Measures” (2004-2006) projects enable SEA to increase the involvement of unemployed in training for the acquisition of the first-, second-, third, fourth-level professional qualification and updating professional qualification. The Project “Training aimed at raising of competitiveness of unemployed and job seekers” - is more closely related to “softer” employability skills´ development and includes lectures, workshops, short-term training in job seeking, vocational self-determination, development of training skills, business basics, labour legislation basics thematic courses and individual guidance provided by psychologists, lawyers, economists, social service employees, civil servants, teachers etc. Young people (15-24 years) compose 18,9% of unemployed and job seekers involved in this Project.

PCCSA provides career counselling services for a wide range of public – students, unemployed, employed, students´ parents, and among them social exclusion risk groups. PCCSA services are more devoted to enhancement clients´ career management skills – commonly identified as self awareness (ie needs determination, diagnosing occupational interests and abilities, educational opportunity awareness, occupation awareness (occupation descriptions, entry requirements etc.) decision making skills and transition skills). General school students of senior forms compose more than 50% of such PCCSA services users. With a significant support from ESF career education is developed within the education system, starting with September 2005 we expect a decrease in students as a PCCSA clients. That provides the opportunity to develop more individual approach especially for social exclusion risk groups.

The extent to which an individuals are aware of what they possess in terms of knowledge, abilities, talents, skills and attitudes and its relevance to the employment opportunities available affect their willingness to enter education, training and other activities designed to upgrade their skills. 77% of PCCSA clients are very satisfied with received services, 88% thought that such services would be very useful for other. Besides PCCSA provides individual or group sessions for enhancement job search and self-presentation skills of employed and students of general and vocational schools, colleges, universities. PCCSA capacity is strengthened within the ESF National Programme “Support for Capacity Building of Institutions Responsible for Labour Market and Gender Equality Policies and Support for Information Dissemination and Increasing Public Awareness” project.

Nevertheless, according to young people needs determination analysis the demand for career management and job search skills development services are larger than PCCSA capacity allows. Therefore the role of educational sector cannot be overestimated. Ministry of Education and Science started the ESF National Programme Project “Support for Introducing Vocational Guidance and Career Development Programmes in the Educational System” (2005-2007) aimed to improve accessibility and quality of vocational guidance provisions and career education at educational institutions of all types and levels in the perspective of lifelong learning by fostering the implementation of initial and continuing

training of guidance practitioners/school teachers, developing training materials and information resources.

It is expected that introduction of career education system will result in further growth of young people competitiveness in labour market.

The lack of regular labour market forecasts is other obstacle for wide and sustainable employability skills development especially for young people who need career planning. Therefore MoW had started ESF National Programme “Research on Labour Market Issues” ( 2004-2006) including research and development of long-term labour market forecasting system .

Regarding targeting adults for employability (especially job search) skills programs priority is given to unemployed. However, much more attention would be put towards young people who search for the first job and employed who need acquire work transition skills.

## **Career development services for workforce development – Latvia.**

The number of legal acts (the Social security Law, the Law on Support of Unemployed and Job-seekers, the Law of Education, the Law of Vocational Education and Training) serve as general guidelines for career guidance development policy in Latvia. The Ministry of Welfare (MoW) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) shares the responsibility of providing career information, guidance and counseling services.

Professional Career Counselling State Agency (PCCSA) of MoW works according “career centre” model providing access to information, guidance and career counseling services to all population (students, employed, unemployed, job seekers, social exclusion risk groups, students’ parents) through its 23 regional offices. PCCSA provides individual and group counseling sessions on clients self-awareness, career planning, career decision making, job seeking. PCCSA compiles and disseminates educational and occupational information; develops guidance and counseling strategies and methods; concepts and needs of students regarding their career plans and choices. Besides others services PCCSA provides evaluation of motivation and abilities of unemployed before long term retraining/further education courses in SEA on the basis of cooperation agreement.

The State Employment Agency (SEA) of MoW realizes competitiveness raising measures for unemployed and job seekers including informative sessions about SEA services, lectures/workshops on the topics relevant for the unemployed of particular region, group training sessions in general job seeking, vocational self-determination, training skills improvement, labor legislation basics, business basics etc., and individual guidance provided by psychologists, lawyers, economists, social services employees, civil servants, teachers etc. Competitiveness raising measures includes modular training (short term) courses (state language, foreign languages, computer skills, project management, driving, office management, practical marketing, entrepreneurship in rural areas etc.) also.

The Social Integration Centre of MoW provides professional, social and medical rehabilitation services for disabled.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) promotes career education development and integration of vocational guidance items within general school curricula and Local governments are expected to secure guidance activities in schools, but the existing regulations do not articulate objectives, responsibilities or standards.

National Resource Center for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) acting as a structural unit within Vocational Education Development Agency of MoES collects and disseminates information about education and training opportunities in Latvia and provides information exchange with NRCVGs in Europe about educational system, vocational qualifications and labour market, innovative guidance projects etc.

Despite the well established legislative framework of career guidance, responsibilities and tasks of the involved institutions are discussed several times during recent years. In the middle of May 2004 a working group was established bringing together institutions involved in career guidance both of MoW and MoES. The main task for this working group was to revise, evaluate and propose amendments to the existing legislation ensuring that: all activities vital for vocational guidance and career counseling are covered, the activities of institutions do not overlap, and that every institution concentrates on the core tasks and services by cooperating in all other common issues leading to synergy effect to the benefit of all clients and the career guidance system in Latvia. This working group has only initiated common activities but continuation of established cooperation is expected on a regular basis.

MoW had chosen the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour and the Federal Employment Agency of Germany as Twinning partner in the EU PHARE Twinning Project “Employment Strategy” (2003-2005). This Project was taking special care of SEA and PCCSA. Recommendations were given: for PCCSA - to fully strengthen its capacity and to continue its reforms to improve efficiency and continue offering its services both to job seekers/unemployed and school/training institution students; and for SEA – to

continue its reforms to improve efficiency and databases modernizing, more stress dedicating on services for employers and programs to promote business start-ups and job creation.

The MoW with support from ESF are implementing National Program “Support for Capacity Building of Institutions Responsible for Labour Market and Gender Equality Policies and Support for Information Dissemination and Increasing Public Awareness” projects in PCCSA (2004-2007) and SEA (2004-2006). The National Program of ERDF includes projects (2004-2006) for improvement infrastructure and IT systems both in PCCSA and SEA.

MoES has started the ESF National Program Project “Support for Introducing Vocational Guidance and Career Development Programmes in the Educational System” (2005-2007) which would introduce career education in education system in Latvia.

In April 2005, the Prime-Minister of Latvia had identified the problem of proper career guidance. Therefore, the MoW established a working group for analysis of capacity and target groups of involved institutions, clarifying the relevant terminology and developing the new conception of “Career development supporting system”.

Latvia shared the career guidance problems with other countries of the EU at Peer - Review Seminar “Supporting Lifelong learning through the development of guidance services in Latvia” (November 2005). Both models – career counseling service is integrated in SEA or it is working as an independent institution – were discussed. “Career centre” model has wide range of preferences and in the some other countries (ie. United Kingdom) it is working very well.

Previous strategy of career guidance policy in Latvia realized in strengthening of institutions of MoW has brought results: while total unemployment rate in EU countries changes little and even increases for young people, it permanently decreases in Latvia during the last years.

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Unemployment rate, total (EUROSTAT)	EU25	8,4	8,8	9,0	9,1	8,7
	EU15	7,3	7,6	8,9	8,1	7,9
	Latvia	12,9	12,2	10,5	10,4	9,0
Unemployment rate, young people (less than 25 years) (EUROSTAT)	EU25	17,7	18,3	18,8	18,9	18,5
	EU15	15,2	15,7	16,5	16,7	16,7
	Latvia	23,0	22,0	18,0	18,1	13,7
Secondary school graduates, discontinue studying (CSB, Latvia)		29%	26%	22%	22%	..
Number of PCCSA clients, receiving career counseling services		21969	30442	36406	38399	43176
Number of PCCSA regional offices		11	20	20	20	23
Number of unemployed involved by SEA in competitiveness raising measures		24667	29437	29180	60713	136056
Percentage of unemployed finding job or starting education after competitiveness raising measures		46,0%	40,9%	44,0%	24,5%	33,4%





# Norway

**Topics covered:**

Human capital

Labour supply

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## Theme: Human capital, Norway

### 1. The Norwegian authorities' cooperation on the interfaces between education and working life

As in most countries, Norway has many different political and policy approaches to research, education and life-long learning, innovation, the labour market, inclusion and regional development. Funding is granted through the budgets of several Ministries, including funding for labour-market programmes, competence-raising programmes in business and industry, health-enterprise education and Norwegian language training for immigrants, to name just a few. At the same time, there is a need for better coordination of the development and use of human capital ("Mønsterbryterne" [The Pattern Breakers], UFD 2005). To gain more from the substantial investments in knowledge, Norway must intensify its efforts to improve the interaction between education and working life.

The challenges Norway is facing include high dropout rates in upper secondary education, recruitment problems (particularly to natural science subjects), incorrect choices and maladjustment, practice shock, absence of entrepreneurship training, competence gap, inadequate mobility between working life and the education system, under-utilization of immigrants' competence and inadequate dissemination of knowledge, experience and good-practice models.

Norway participated in the OECD's study on career guidance (the Quality in Career Guidance Report, 2001 and Country Report from Norway, 2002). National studies were also carried out at the same time and resulted in two reports from working groups convened by AAD (The former Ministry of Labour and Administration) and UFD (The Ministry of Education and Research) (Norwegian Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education, 2002 and The Norwegian Public Employment Service, 2004). All point to a need for a better and more comprehensive career guidance service in Norway, and this was followed up in White Paper no. 30 (2003-2004) "Kultur for læring" [Culture for Learning], the Proposition to Parliament no. 268 (2003-2004) and the decision to introduce the education reform *Kunnskapsløftet* [Knowledge Promotion].

The result is a broad, comprehensive programme to strengthen career guidance in primary education. A strategy is also being developed to strengthen cooperation on and coordination and cohesion of career guidance in a lifelong perspective, *Partnerskap for karriereveiledning* [Partnership for Career Guidance].

### 2. Partnership for Career Guidance: Measure aimed at making career guidance more holistic and cohesive in education and labour market policy

In White Paper no.30 (2003-2004), and as part of the education reform entitled *Knowledge Promotion*, the education authorities have initiated regional *Partnership for Career Guidance* pilot projects in three counties, Nordland, Telemark and Akershus. It is expected that the remaining 16 counties will also develop such partnerships.

The aim is to develop models for binding partnerships for coordination and cooperation on career guidance in a lifelong perspective in each county. The county authorities are responsible for seeing to it that partnerships are established, and it is up to them to decide how this is to be done. It is expected that partnerships will be established with such parties as the county governors, *Aetat*, KS (The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities), employee and employer associations, institutions of higher education and other relevant public and private agencies, as a second-line service that will help to improve guidance where it is given. *Partnership for Career Guidance* aims to improve the guidance service in primary school and upper secondary school by providing the school owners and schools with updated information. It can also offer training, initiate pilot projects and implement strategies to improve the quality of the guidance given, to strengthen the cooperation on career guidance as a measure to benefit working life and labour market policy, and to satisfy the need for a coordinated guidance service for adults. It is expected that regional *Partnerships for Career Guidance* should help make it easier to navigate through the guidance measures by clarifying roles and duties for agencies and cooperation partners in the career guidance field.

*Aetat* and the county authorities have initiated the pilot project in Nordland county. Here it is assumed that the partnership will address guidance tasks that currently are placed under various administrative levels by using a more common service, i.e. "an open door" policy. The primary target group has been adult job- and education seekers. This means adult jobseekers, young persons who have not attained qualifications for admission to further studies or vocations, persons being vocationally rehabilitated, employees who are redundant or are in danger of being made redundant, non-native speakers and the occupationally challenged. *Aetat* expects that the project will form the basis for more targeted and effective programmes, that it will get jobseekers into working life more rapidly, and that it will increase the number of users who firmly establish themselves in the labour market.

### **3. Career guidance in school**

The proposed new section 22 in the Regulations relating to the Education Act dealing with the right to necessary guidance clarifies and specifies work duties for the career guidance service and sets up requirements for results. The proposal for the new regulations will be forwarded to the Ministry in March 2006. According to the proposal career guidance is to initiate and stimulate development processes for the student. In addition to the information and experience they acquire, each pupil will be offered individual guidance and receive assistance in drawing up a career plan.

Measures aimed at improving career guidance and the transition from lower to upper secondary school have already been initiated: Career guidance will be part of each school's overriding plan so that the whole school is responsible for career guidance of the pupils. A special subject is being introduced at the lower secondary school level, programme subject, based on the syllabuses for the subjects in each education programme in upper secondary school. The programme subject is designed in such a way that it can be adapted to each pupil's interests and needs. Visits to upper secondary school and/or local businesses and industries may be relevant measures.

Furthermore, the directorate, in cooperation with relevant partners, will continue to promote greater cooperation between the school and business and industry will be facilitated through pupil companies (Young Entrepreneurship) and company visits, and by offering trainee places in working life in cooperation with the Follow-up Service. The tradition of long-term and binding cooperation agreements between school and working life, partnership agreements, shall be continued and developed. The need to professionalize the career guidance service will be satisfied by offering further education and courses to career guidance counsellors.

## Theme: Labour supply, Norway

### 1. Labour market policy on using the talents of vulnerable groups

The Norwegian Government has introduced a number of measures to achieve its goal of a more inclusive society. The Government has taken a broad approach to attaining these goals by making resources and means available within several policy areas. Labour market policy is one such area, where some important measures are:

- Action plan against poverty
- A major plan to promote mental well-being, where *Aetat's* services focus on helping jobseekers with psychological problems to increase their participation in working life
- Reactivation of disability pensioners
- Intensifying collaboration between *Aetat* and the National Insurance Service as they undertake a major organisational reform. In the New Public Work and Welfare Agency (NAV), *Aetat* (PES) and the National Insurance Service (state agencies) will merge and form a strong partnership with social welfare offices in each community. Implementation of the reform will start in 2006 with a completion date in 2010. The objectives are to simplify, better coordinate and individualize measures, and thus improve the efforts aimed at including groups at risk and public-benefit claimants in the labour market.

A whole range of measures is being applied in pilot projects, including wage subsidies for reactivation, use of the disability pension as a wage subsidy and coordinating measures between agencies. Close follow-up and adequate time resources are prerequisites for success.

### 2. Better basic competence for adults and assessment of non-formal learning and cataloguing competence

In Norway we have good programmes in place to ensure that everyone, including adults, has the right to primary education and assessment of non-formal learning as needed. Our challenges are to inform and motivate persons seeking an education and a job about their rights and coordinating the activities between agencies to make it easier for individuals to use this right. We also need to have a more uniform application of tools used to document non-formal learning.

In 2006 a new programme for increased basic competence is being tested in working life in cooperation with the employer and employee associations. Private and public enterprises can apply for funding to initiate training in basic skills for employees or jobseekers. Improving employees' and jobseekers' basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and computers, and improving their social and vocational knowledge will help to solidify their connection to working life, improve their ability to adapt and reorganise in work situations, and make them more employable.

There is currently not enough assessment of non-formal learning in the qualification of jobseekers. Various agencies use different tools and do not coordinate their use of the tools to determine and document each person's competence. Vocational testing, which is especially suited to documenting the skills of immigrants, is also very little used. Methods have been developed to accredit training from abroad, but the approval schemes are not linked to any great degree to the possibilities for vocational and educational guidance or trainee places. There is a lack of competence in using the methods, and corresponding methods have not been developed for vocations that require certification.

Adults who become redundant or for other reasons wish to re-train are often left to struggle with hard-to-understand information about education programmes and the labour market. The rights that adults have to education and training are not well known. *Aetat* may be under-utilized as an information and motivation channel, and almost half of *Aetat's* users feel they receive inadequate information about education programmes. The responsibility for vocational and educational guidance is fragmented and distributed among a number of actors. Attempts are now being made to improve this through pilot projects for partnership for career guidance in all the counties in Norway, as mentioned above under section 3: Human Capital. More permanent schemes may eventually be considered and may also be considered in conjunction with the new labour and welfare agency when established in the autumn of 2006.

### **3. Cooperation on increased better graduation rates and prevention of dropouts in upper secondary education**

As part of the Government's *Handlingsplan mot fattigdom* [Action Plan against Poverty] the follow-up service's efforts to prevent young persons from dropping out of upper secondary education is under development. The project *Satsing mot frafall* [Stopping dropouts] has three specific aims where measures focus on stopping pupils from dropping out, finding the young persons at risk and helping them back to employment or training and developing methods to improve our statistics base and documentation in the field.

Differentiated training measures, better career guidance and offers of training in alternative learning arenas in cooperation with working life are important measures, in addition to developing cooperation networks locally to assist pupils who are at risk of dropping out. The Follow-up Service will serve as an active cooperation partner with the school's counselling service and pedagogical psychological service, and shall contribute to developing arenas for cooperation between the various levels of school, with pupils' parents, the school health service, neighbourhood business and industry organizations, *Aetat*, the police, the social security services and so on. Programmes have been initiated to develop the competence of the pupils' various "helpers".

The *Stopping Dropouts* project will be evaluated in 2006. The Government has also appointed a working group that is reviewing possible new measures to improve the graduation rates in upper secondary education.

### **4. School's work with career guidance**

Bearing in mind the proposed new section 22 in the Regulations relating to the Education Act – *Retten til nødvendig rådgivning* [The Right to Necessary Guidance] – the counselling service in primary education will be facing new challenges in a number of areas and to meet them its structure, content and methods must be improved.

Career guidance shall be reflected in the school's overriding plans and objectives and in its annual plans and shall be part of the school's comprehensive activities, adapted to local conditions. School career counsellors shall have cutting edge competence in providing individual guidance and be the school's coordinator on career guidance. Career guidance shall both provide information on education possibilities and options and on vocational choices, in addition to offering individual counselling. The individual counselling shall be adapted to the abilities, opportunities and needs of each individual, and shall assist each individual in planning his or her future in a long-term perspective. It shall facilitate for close cooperation with local business and industry. Norwegian career guidance has had too great a focus on providing information on education opportunities and career choices. The new aim is that career guidance should become more development and process oriented. Importance shall be attached to allowing individuals to develop the competence to plan their own future and to develop a career plan in cooperation with the career counsellor.





# **New Zealand**

## **Topics covered:**

Labour supply  
Employability skills

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## Introduction

Government is increasingly seeing career information, advice and guidance (CIAG) as a tool that can be used to add value and support education, labour force participation and employment initiatives. Labour Supply and Employability Skills have, therefore, been chosen as themes to explore in this paper. CIAG has an important role to play in assisting individuals to make successful transitions over their working life from education to work and in and out of the labour market.

### *New Zealand in a global context*

In common with other developed countries, New Zealand faces skill shortages and gaps exacerbated by the following international trends:

- a global market for skills which are in high demand internationally,
- an increase in the rate of technological change which is resulting in people's existing skills becoming outdated, and
- an ageing population due to increased longevity and a lower birth rate which may reduce the number of people available for work in the future.

### *Challenges faced by New Zealand*

New Zealand has the lowest unemployment rate in the OECD at 3.6 percent (as of December 2005). A shortage of labour remains a constraint on economic growth in the current tight labour market and to varying degrees, skill shortages are apparent across most industries and regions.

New Zealand also faces the following trends:

- a high number of hours worked but low productivity (by OECD standards),
- a significant number of people in the workforce with low levels of literacy, numeracy and language,
- significant out-migration of people, of working age, particularly to Australia,
- although labour force participation rates are above the OECD average, there is a low rate of paid work among some groups, such as mothers of young children, and
- increasing ethnic diversity.

A challenge for New Zealand will be striking the right balance between equipping people with the specific skills needed today and providing the generic competencies to enable people and firms to adapt to future needs.

### *Government strategies*

New Zealand needs to improve its ability to develop, attract, retain and utilise people at all levels in the workforce, from the highly skilled to those whose lack of literacy, numeracy and language skills are a barrier to productivity growth.

Given its relatively small size and unicameral system of government, New Zealand is well placed to develop whole-of-government strategies to address policy concerns such as these. New priorities have been introduced aimed at aligning education with New Zealand's economic and labour market needs.

The provision of quality and relevant education is an essential part of the government's vision for New Zealand. In recent years, the government's priorities in tertiary education have shifted toward developing a system which remains broad and comprehensive, but is oriented toward strengthening all aspects of quality within the system, and providing education that is more closely aligned with national skill and economic development needs.

The government has also broadened the focus of its employment strategy, placing greater emphasis on the quality of work and the rewards from it. The strategy, "Better Work, Working Better", aims to achieve high quality employment in productive and innovative industries, regions and businesses that drive sustainable economic growth and opportunities for all.

New Zealand has a crown agency, Career Services rapuara, which is contracted to the Minister of Education and tasked with delivering CIAG to all New Zealanders, regardless of age.<sup>6</sup> Career Services also contributes career policy advice to wider government. CIAG in New Zealand is also delivered by private sector organisations.

## **Theme: Labour Supply**

### *Introduction*

Changing demographics will increasingly impact on the size and composition of New Zealand's working age population and labour supply, including:

- an ageing population, with the median age in New Zealand projected to rise from 35 in 2005 to 40 in 2020,
- increased Maori and Pacific peoples<sup>7</sup> populations due to higher birth rates for these groups, and
- an expected high rate of net Asian migration coupled with natural increases. The Asian share of the population is expected to rise from 7% in 2001 to 13% in 2021.

A more ethnically diverse population will pose a challenge for the development of labour force participation and career guidance policies. Other considerations which impact on the development of labour force participation policies in New Zealand are the high and sustained skill and labour shortages being faced by many industries. Shortages are intensifying among low-skilled/semi-skilled occupations, where there is a higher concentration of Maori and Pacific peoples, and in many trades.

### *Policy approaches*

#### Customised delivery to different groups

Several cross-government initiatives are underway to not only improve but also enhance the labour participation of under-represented groups. For example, the New Zealand Settlement Strategy, led by the Department of Labour, aims to improve settlement outcomes, including labour market outcomes, for migrants and refugees. In some cases migrants and refugees have the skills needed by the labour market but lack localised knowledge which then acts as a barrier for the effective utilisation of their skills and expertise. In other cases, existing qualifications or expertise gained overseas may not be recognised by industry or professional registration bodies or are deemed to be not relevant to the New Zealand labour market. As part of this cross-government initiative, tailored career and labour market information and advice is offered to migrants and refugees. Improving the matching of migrants and refugees' skills and talents to the New Zealand labour market supports the Strategy's goal that migrants, refugees and their families obtain employment appropriate to their skills and complements other aspects of the Strategy.

One of New Zealand's current approaches to the issue of labour supply is to identify groups within the population who are under-represented in the labour market and who might benefit from some intervention. For example, Maori and Pacific peoples are:

- significantly under-represented at degree and post-degree level in tertiary education,
- more likely to leave school with low or no qualifications, and
- have higher unemployment rates than the national average.

The provision of CIAG is increasingly being seen as a useful intervention tool. Maori and Pacific peoples can often take a different approach to the acquisition of knowledge and skills than other New Zealanders. It is sometimes more appropriate, therefore, to offer career guidance for these groups in a different context and environment to that offered generally. Career Services offers a customised approach for Maori and Pacific peoples by delivering career guidance within a framework that acknowledges their cultural beliefs and values.

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<sup>6</sup> Career Services' services can be accessed through a free phone based service, a website ([www.kiwicareers.govt.nz](http://www.kiwicareers.govt.nz)) and face-to-face consultations in 16 centres located throughout New Zealand.

<sup>7</sup> Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand. Pacific peoples is a collective terms which includes a range of people within New Zealand who have strong family and cultural connections to Pacific Island countries. Pacific peoples can include those born in New Zealand as well as those born overseas but living in New Zealand.

Other government initiatives being developed are also exploring a possible role for CIAG and better labour market information. It has been noted that a significant number of people aged 45 and over are not in the labour force but do not identify themselves as being at home looking after children or involved in study. There is a significant number of people in this age group, therefore, who have potential to contribute to the labour force. Market research is currently underway to identify the reasons for non-participation in this age group, to explore the potential role of career guidance and information to address these barriers, and to assess the most effective way of delivering these career guidance services.

## **Theme: Employability skills**

### *Introduction*

With strong levels of economic growth and low levels of unemployment, the government has sent a clear message that lifting New Zealand's productivity level is crucial to sustaining and building upon this recent growth. Investing in people and skills and creating productive workplace cultures have been identified as two key drivers of productivity.<sup>8</sup> Improving the capacity of the system to assist in developing the employability and career self-management skills of individuals is a key way of better harnessing the potential of the workforce, and thereby of leading to greater productivity.

### *Current and future challenges*

Young people are presented with an increasingly wide range of choices as they make their transition from secondary education into the workforce. The introduction of the National Qualifications Framework, (incorporating the National Certificate of Educational Achievement which is the most widely attained qualification in secondary school), has meant that a much wider range of learning can now be credentialised at secondary and tertiary level. There has also been a growth in vocational education and training opportunities and options available within secondary schools and in tertiary education.

These choices offer young people more flexibility and greater opportunity to follow different pathways into employment. But this greater freedom of choice also means that young people need to be able to access quality information and advice to guide them along these pathways and to achieve a positive outcome for themselves and for the country. The Tertiary Education Strategy 2002/07 (which sets the New Zealand government's overall strategic approach for tertiary education) emphasises the importance of students having access to quality, impartial information and guidance on which to base their decisions. This is specifically reflected in objective 21: "*Learners are equipped to make informed choices about career and learning options*".

There are a number of other challenges in the current system which present barriers to the development of employability and career self-management skills in young people and adults including:

- some concerns about the quality of some CIAG provision in schools,
- a gap in the provision of CIAG services for adults to help sustain their employability and to encourage career self-management through the life span, and
- a significant number of people in the workforce with low literacy, numeracy and language skills which restricts their ability to adapt to changing workplace demands.<sup>9</sup>

### *Policy approaches*

In recent years, the government has initiated a number of projects in order to address some of these challenges.

### Youth Transitions Strategy

The government's Youth Transitions Strategy sets a goal that by 2007 all 15 – 19 year olds will be engaged in appropriate education, training, work, or other options that will lead to long term economic independence and well being. The Youth Transitions Strategy includes a number of initiatives that aim to assist young people to successfully transition from school to education, training or work.

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.workplaceproductivity.govt.nz/>

<sup>9</sup> Estimates based on the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) (1996) indicate that around 330,000 people in the current New Zealand workforce are at the lowest levels of literacy, numeracy and language.

One of these initiatives, which specifically relates to CIAG, is Designing Careers. This pilot, currently running in 75 secondary schools throughout New Zealand, builds upon current career education and planning in these schools by providing new ideas and opportunities for pilot schools to consider. The Designing Careers pilot has two main objectives. The first objective is to inform the development of a better evidence-base for careers education in New Zealand schools by finding out what works well in practice and what does not work so well, which will then be shared more widely. The second objective of this pilot is to provide students with targeted and individualised support that will help them to develop career self-management skills which they can use during other transition points in their adult lives.<sup>10</sup>

#### Lifting the Literacy, Numeracy and Languages skills of New Zealanders

The government is currently developing a Learning for Living strategy that will focus on:

- developing a culture of effective practice for literacy, numeracy and language where evidence, experience, tools and resources are shared in order to meet the real life motivations of students, and
- increasing the literacy, numeracy and language skills of the workforce at the lower-skilled end, which is considered to be one of the critical drivers for lifting New Zealand's productivity.

While this strategy has a broader focus, as part of this approach the government will look to deepen its understandings about how CIAG can be employed to assist individuals and employers in identifying appropriate development opportunities and career progression paths. The roles that government, industry and individuals should play in this will be considered as part of the strategy. It is expected that as individuals develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills, they will have greater self-confidence to manage their career and to seek development opportunities themselves.

#### Online career information and guidance

The use of online career information and guidance is another tool which can assist with adults' career self-management and employability skills. Career Services' website, [www.kiwicareers.govt.nz](http://www.kiwicareers.govt.nz),<sup>11</sup> has been significantly enhanced to provide:

- more comprehensive national and regional labour market information,
- occupational reports and trends in the New Zealand workplace,
- information about what it is like to live and work in different regions of New Zealand, and
- two new skill and subject search engines.

#### **The challenges ahead**

The future poses interesting and exciting challenges for New Zealand as we strive to meet the needs of workforce development in a global context. A major challenge will be to better understand and measure the impact for individuals and the return for the government of CIAG, particularly the use of CIAG as a tool to respond to issues such as labour force participation and sustainable employment.

While New Zealand is taking a whole-of government approach to such issues, we do lack a coherent body of evidence around career guidance best practice and intervention. This means that our ability to demonstrate the link between career guidance and better outcomes in concrete terms is limited. Better and more co-ordinated evaluation programmes will help to determine which approaches will positively impact on labour force participation, education and employment policies.

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<sup>10</sup> The target groups for this pilot are all Year 10 students (ages 14-15) and selected "at risk" students in Years 11-13 (ages 15 – 18). While schools can approach the pilots in different ways, it is expected that each student will be assisted in preparing an individual learning and career plan which is used to set goals, review and assess their achievements through secondary school and beyond.

<sup>11</sup> This website also contains an online guidance tool called Pathfinder which provides a free, personalised, self-directed approach to career guidance. People can create their own individual profile which can be saved, revised and updated over time as their skills develop or interests or life contexts change.





# Oman

**Topics covered:**

Human capital  
Career development services for workforce development

**Prepared by:**

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## **Human capital**

Human capital theory in relation to development and modernisation suggests that at the individual level, people are motivated to invest in themselves in the form of education and training under the expectations that they will be rewarded by higher earnings during their working life.

The human capital theory also perceives education and training as major determining factors of variation in skills and abilities between individuals. As a result of these differences, which were brought about by the level of education and training achieved by individuals, there are also differences in the level of individual earnings. This theory assumes that those who are more educated are supposedly more productive and are rewarded according to their educational attainment and productivity. Levin stated that “higher productivity is assumed to be rewarded in labour markets in education to raise productivity and earnings” (Levin, 1987).

Education is perceived as a positive investment, because an educated population provides a competitive advantage for socio-economic development and growth (Becker, 1975). The human capital theory perceives education and training as major determining factors of variation in skills and abilities among individuals. This theory assumes that those who are more educated are supposedly more productive and are rewarded according to their educational attainment and productivity.

In the light of the above, human capital theory provides the concept that individuals are motivated to pursue education and training based on the notion that education is a source of upward mobility and therefore an enhancement of socio-economic status. The Sultanate of Oman is no exception to this theory. Omani society has taken full advantage of the educational and training facilities offered by the government in order to improve their social well being and secure a suitable life time career. However, this raises two questions: firstly, how much information is available to the public about these opportunities?. And secondly: what objective help are they given in making realistic decisions?.

In a world in which the concept of ‘ a career’ is becoming increasingly fluid, career guidance is not a once-in-a-lifetime injection of wisdom orienting a person towards a particular direction for all time. “As life enters new phase and external circumstances add fresh dimensions to a person’s situation, so the need for guidance arises at various times in an individual’s life” (Ali & Graham, 1996).

## ***Key elements for Oman***

### **Vision 2020**

A key element of Vision 2020 is the planned transformation and re-focussing of the national economy into areas such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries and financial services. Re-focussing the curriculum will place considerable strain on the ability of the education and training systems to produce enough young people with the appropriate skills and qualifications to meet the needs of the new economy and must therefore, be supported by accurate and comprehensive labour market information if the nation is to maintain full value for money from its education and training systems.

### **Limited employment opportunities for nationals**

The Oman economy is finding it increasingly difficult to absorb the number of young people entering the labour market. It is estimated that there are approximately 40,000 young people leaving education to enter the labour market each year. There is a round 500,000 expatriates working in Oman.

### **The requirement for national Oman nationalisation**

There is much non-national, expatriate labour required to provide skills across spectrum of the economy from unskilled, through skilled, to professional and managerial. Achievement of the Oman nationalisation programme will require an enormous shift in the way nationals are prepared for the future labour market.

### **Benefits to employers**

Careers guidance services help reduce employee-search costs. Significant saving can be made by ensuring that the motivation and talent of potential employees match the requirements of the employer.

Careers guidance staff help individuals to be realistic in their applications and help individuals in making their applications e.g. by arranging appointments to meet employers. Careers guidance staff provide a range of specific services e.g. outplacement services, career development counseling. They also provide staff development and consultancy to employers on a range of issues including how to manage the career development of employees and how to understand changes in the education and training systems.

### **Benefits to government**

Governments are centrally concerned with building a strong cohesive society. Career guidance contributes to the optimum use of the human resources of a country to achieve these economic and social purposes.

Career guidance contributes to:

- **Economic planning:** The collection and analysis of labour market information, vacancy and destination information can assist economic planning.
- **Economic development:** Careers guidance encourages individuals to hold realistically high aspiration and to invest in lifelong education and training. Economic development is fostered by raising individuals' awareness of the increasing skill levels required in employment. Careers guidance strengthens the formal economy by encouraging employers to provide proper training and decent working conditions for potential recruits.
- **Social equity:** Careers guidance fosters social equity by promoting equal access to opportunities in education, training and employment.

### **Conclusion**

In short, career guidance:

- helps create a sound and well skilled workforce, attracting investment and enterprise.
- maximises the use of the working population;
- provides job satisfaction leading to life satisfaction and stability;
- represents a sound investment for future prosperity;
- maximises the competitive edge of the country.

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### **Career development services**

The following models of careers guidance could be adapted in Oman:

1. Acting as an employment bureau (a model that simply reacts to existing structural problems in the labour market).
2. acting as a 'market-maker' ( a model whereby CEG 'lubricates' policy development – e.g. helping to effect structural change in the labour market).
3. Providing an individualised careers service.
4. Vocationalising the secondary curriculum through careers education (a model whereby CEG effects structural change in the education system, i.e. preparing young Omanis for the labour market).

## **Establishment of Oman National Careers Centre (ONCGC)**

The proposed National Career Guidance Centre would have a number of functions:

- A base for professional careers advisers to work from when visiting schools and colleges as well as industry.  
The former to support the careers education programme and provide impartial careers guidance counselling. The latter to advocate on students' and education's behalf as well as to understand employers' needs and relate these needs back to education.
- A central labour market information database point.  
This for the collection and collation of labour market information, and dissemination to interested parties, e.g. Ministries, schools and colleges. This information would be in the form of statistical information, trends, occupational analysis and vacancies.
- A central careers library, containing information from employers, professional bodies, colleges and Universities, on the complete range of their respective activities.  
The purpose of this library would be for the students and other interested parties to fully understand the potential opportunities which could be available to them, and the perspective routes to achieve those opportunities in Government Service and opportunities in private sector. It would take some time to complete a fully comprehensive library of potential opportunities as employers, education providers and professional bodies would need to be visited by careers advisers to obtain the information and write it up in a form suitable for students. In addition, such opportunity providers could be encouraged to compile their own literature for this library. The central library could eventually become the main distribution point of careers literature to schools and further / higher education institutes.
- An access point, independent from schools and colleges for impartial careers guidance and psychometric profiling.  
This facility would be available for young people still attending school or college but for some reasons wished to receive careers guidance at an independent venue. It would also be of use to young people who have left education and still seeking employment or training.
- Support to employers for the recruitment and selection of new employees.  
Careers advisers could advise and help employers with recruitment and selection methods. E.g. training courses on interviewing skills, psychometric profiling etc., to help ensure employers obtain the right people for their needs.
- As a centre for continues professional development for careers teachers.  
This would encompass the provision of off site, in-service professional development training courses for teachers, with careers advisers. Such courses would be short, evening single day events focusing on particular aspects of careers work.

## **Benefits of the Centre**

The establishment of an Omani Career Guidance Centre will:

- demonstrate the Government's commitment to maximising the potential of each individual through worthwhile employment;
- provide a comprehensive and planned careers education and guidance programmes that will develop in young nationals a realistic work ethic and equip them with the skills necessary to enter the labour market;
- develop a structure whereby those to enter the labour market can be objectively assessed, professionally supported and realistically guided;
- support in principle and practice, the Government's "Omanisation" programme.
- encourage a cohesive approach to national human resources planning and management;
- provide a framework within which the national educational curriculum can be developed to reflect the needs and requirements of the economy;
- increase the awareness of global educational and employment opportunities;

- enhance the recruitment, selection and training procedures of employers in line with Government policies and economic requirements; offer support to those who are medium or long term unemployed.

### Human resources

The National Careers Centre would have an adequate number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfil its mission and functions. All units must be staffed by persons who, in combination, provide the core competencies to perform primary programme functions effectively. Examples of primary programme functions and their related core competencies and knowledge domains are defined below:

Functions	Core Competencies	Knowledge
Programme management and administration	Needs assessment; program design, implementation & evaluation; strategic & operational planning; staffing; staff development & supervision; budget planning & administration; reporting.	System theory; organisational development; research design; spastics; accounting and budgeting procedures; purchasing; staff selection; supervision; performance appraisals; management information systems; goal setting; problem solving; customer service; marketing.
Career counselling and consultation	Needs assessment & diagnosis; intervention design & implementation; test administration & interpretation; counselling; feedback; evaluation; empathy & interpersonal sensitivity; work with individuals & groups; use of career, occupational, & employment information.	Career development theories; statistics; counselling processes; evaluation of person-job fit; job analysis; career decision making; behaviour management; job search techniques (interviews, c.v.s etc.)
Teaching Training Educating	Needs assessment; program/workshop design; research, evaluating, & integrating information; training/teaching; coaching; work with individuals & groups.	Setting of objectives; designing curricula & learning resources for specific content areas; experiential education.
Information management	Organisation & dissemination; storage & retrieval; computing systems & applications; data entry & analysis.	Library/resources centre organisation; computer system & applications; specific electronic management information systems; publishing.

### Professional positions

Professional staff members must have the requisite qualifications and competencies to perform effectively in their defined roles with clients, employers, as well as in highly specialised functions, such as career and employment counselling, co-operative education, graduate school advising, computer technology, etc.

To be qualified, professional staff members must have a graduate degree in a field of study relevant to the particular job in question or have an appropriate combination of education and experience. Prior work experience may be of considerable value to career counselling and programme co-ordination functions.

### **Support staff and technical positions**

Each organisational unit must have adequate administrative and technical staff adequate to accomplish its mission. Such staff must be competent to perform their duties. The size of support staff should be sufficient to perform the tasks of reception, secretarial, appointment scheduling, maintenance and processing of credentials and other files, compilation of data, and other tasks required by the programmes. A technical support person or support service should be available to maintain computer and information technology systems for career services.

### **Facilities and equipment**

The centre should have adequate facilities and equipment to fulfil its mission and to perform its functions effectively. Facilities must be accessible to persons with disabilities. The centre must have private offices for professional staff in order to perform counselling or other confidential work; support staff work areas; reception; career resource library; storage space sufficient to accommodate supplies and equipment; and necessary office equipment (photocopy machine, telephones, fax, etc).

The centre should be located conveniently and should project a welcoming professional atmosphere for young people, parents, employers and others.

The centre should provide office hours at appropriate times for its constituencies. Parking for visitors should be adequate and convenient. An employer lounge should be available.

Sufficient information technology should be available for clients and staff to support career services functions. Equipment and facilities should be secured to protect the confidentiality and safety of records.

### **Recognition**

The National Career Guidance Centre would need be fully recognised and supported by the University, the appropriate Ministries and employment providers. This would give it the necessary academic standing and high level official status to be accepted by the educational, and industrial and commercial worlds.



# Poland

**Topics covered:**

Career development services for workforce development

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## **Career development services for workforce development**

### **1. Does the way in which public employment services are organized assist workforce development as effectively as it could?**

A new law on employment promotion and labour market institutions, introduced in 2004, is the legal basis regulating the functioning of employment services in Poland. The public employment services (PES) consist of 16 voivodship labour offices (WUP), 54 of vocational information and career planning centres (CliPKZ), 338 local labour offices (PUP) and the office of the minister of labour as the national body responsible for the labour market policy.

All legal conditions have been created to support human resource development by PES. But the decentralised organisation of PES hampers the coordination of activities and the application of uniform service standards for the unemployed and jobseekers.

We are in the process of preparing standards for labour market services, which are to be implemented in the near future.

Moreover, PES are focusing mainly on the unemployed (the high unemployment rate). Activities aimed at the other target groups reach them in an unsatisfactory way and it is not only the result of the low budget for the Active Labour Market Policy (only 0.22% of GDP in 2005).

### **2. What is the role, and what should be the role, of career development services in modern public employment services?**

The guidance services functioning within PES play an essential role in implementing the labour market policy in Poland. Career guidance and job placement services in Poland are the two main services provided within the modern PES.

According to the new employment law vocational information and guidance consist of the following activities:

- to assist the unemployed and jobseekers in the choice of job and/or place of employment,
- to support employers in matching up candidates to the appropriate vacancies, in particular to provide them with information and advice in this field.

The crucial conditions for increasing career guidance effectiveness are the following:

- increasing the accessibility to guidance services (GS), these services should be provided as an element of mobilization activities within all employment services,
- enlarging the scope of information services and covering a larger group of customers (the number of 550.000 clients provided with this service in 2005 is too small in relation to the 2,7 m unemployed),
- ensuring the quality of guidance services,
- increasing the number and permanent development of the competencies of counsellor staff; the number of counsellors employed within PES should be significantly increased (1 counsellor per 3600 unemployed people at present, although it is better than 4 years ago – 1 per 6800, but it is still not enough),
- development of the counsellors' workplace facilities (methods, tools, information resources) and the dissemination of modern technology,
- strengthening the co-operation within guidance services in several ways:
  - local, regional and international co-operation,
  - co-operation between education and employment sectors,
  - co-operation between public and private sectors, in particular private guidance agencies,
  - co-operation within the wide area of labour market institutions.

The modern guidance services aimed at the unemployed and jobseekers should consist not only of assistance in the choice of a job best suited to the client's interests and qualifications but they should also support the client's activities concerning the development of his/her life and career path with particular emphasis on the development of his/her social and professional competencies as well as his/her educational and vocational mobility.

Widening the scope of services addressed to employers is also essential, especially while recruiting candidates who are unemployed or in danger of social exclusion.

### **3. What should be the role of the education sector?**

Within the tasks of the education sector, the following activities appear to be the most important:

- Introducing issues of individual career management into the curricula at all education levels.
- Putting special stress on practical education, especially within vocational education and training (lack of practical skills appear to be an obstacle in employing graduates).
- Creating an efficient system of vocational guidance and counselling including services for pupils and students of all educational levels.
- Providing guidance services to pupils, students and also to parents and teachers.
- Increasing the accessibility to GS (ensuring a counsellor post in schools, the development of the School Career Centres, reaching persons in danger of social exclusion).
- Creating a system of vocational information (data-bases of schools and training institutions).
- Strengthening of co-operation with social partners.

### **4. What should the role of private employment services be?**

Private employment agencies, being the partners of PES, as a labour market institution play a significant role in implementing the policy aimed at increasing employment. Private agencies' activities on the labour market are an essential supplement to the services provided by PES.

Private employment agencies already exist on the Polish labour market, but they work in a dual system: on the one hand – PES, on the other hand – private agencies.

At present the scale of services provided by private agencies is not very high, especially with reference to guidance agencies.

It is also possible for PES to commission labour market services (especially placement and guidance), but this option is not yet widely used.

It is necessary to increase the partnership and complementarity of activities of both sides, also with regard to NGOs, which often offer employment services to high risk groups.

### **5. What policy safeguards should be put in place for the expansion of this sector?**

The following activities should be undertaken to widen the private sector:

- Preparing adequate legal regulations concerning the existence of employment agencies. At present the new employment law regulates this area in Poland. But it is also necessary to elaborate more transparent regulations which would lead to the commissioning of employment services on a wider scale.
- Elaboration and implementation of mechanisms ensuring the quality and effectiveness of services provided.
- Strengthening the role of non public services by including them in government documents e.g. National Action Plan for Employment.
- Widening the promotion of these services.

### **6. How should career development services be funded, given that they contribute to both private, organizational and public policy goals?**

The career guidance services should be financed from various sources.

The most important are:

- The National Budget.
- Local self-government budgets.
- The fund created by employers (the Labour Fund in Poland).
- European funds (e.g. the European Social Fund).
- Other sources (e.g. trade union funds).

- The guidance services should also be funded by employers, for example when they concern professional retraining programs or investment in human resources development.
- Individual financing should also be considered, for example assessment of competence, as a service commonly available to persons interested in changing their position on the labour market.

It is very important to create the conditions and support the approach of employers and individuals, leading to a change in the character of guidance services from only “reactive“ to “proactive” types.



# South Africa

**Topics covered:**

Human capital  
Career development services for workforce development

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## A South African Public Service Perspective

Please note that the authors of the South Africa paper for this symposium do not include any policy experts from the South African government.

### THEME 1: HUMAN CAPITAL

*(What is human capital and what is the role of each stakeholder in its development? Where do career management skills fit in? What collaborative strategies are required at local, regional and national levels for governments and social partners to have career development as an integral part of workforce development policies and programmes? What are the respective and complimentary roles of career practitioners, employers, and policy developers in the provision and accessibility of such services? What is the role of the education sector in developing and providing a foundation for the human capital of the future? How can enterprise and sector workforce needs be reconciled with individuals' career needs and goals? What are the specific ways forward to begin to implement this policy direction?)*

#### Human Capital and Stakeholders

South Africa describes and acknowledges its “human capital”, the roles of different stakeholders, and the integration and attainment of complementariness between differing government policies in a Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy for South Africa that states the overall vision of “A nation at work for a better life for all”. The origin of this strategy is based on the key principle that people and their aspirations and collective determination are critical resources and that development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. Development is about active involvement and growing empowerment (South Africa, 2001).

The overarching goals of the HRD Strategy are to improve the relatively low Human Development Index of SA, to ensure international competitiveness and to reduce inequality (i.e., wealth and poverty) by maximising the potential of people, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills (South Africa, 2001).

The HRD Strategy provides guidelines for the various components of the state to work together. For example, the Cabinet shapes and direct the policy and ensures accountability and is advised by heads of departments on human resource development. The Human Sciences Research Council serves as a support agency to monitor the progress of different indicators to achieve the strategic objectives of the strategy and thus enable the reporting of the impact of the development of human resources to Cabinet against baseline date. The Department of Labour (DOL) is responsible for Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA's) that includes private and public sectors, and the Department of Education is responsible for reshaping further and higher education.

One of the strategic objectives of the HRD Strategy is described as “increasing employer participation in life long learning” and one success indicator is specified as *public sector education and training* to support service delivery, in addition to private sector commitment to skills development (South Africa, 2001). The Public Service is a major stakeholder in the implementation of the HRD Strategy. It is not only identified as a strategic partner contributing to economic growth by means of public service delivery, but also as the single largest employer in the country – employing 6.2% of the total labour force (Diphofa, 2005; Statistics South Africa, Sept 2005).

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is responsible for Human Resources Policy Formulation and advice for Public Service, and together with the Public Service Education and Training Authority (PSETA) specifying the transversal skill areas and government departments specifying the functional areas that are critical for service delivery. Each government department (i.e. employer) must align their training budget to work skills plans, whilst the PSETA ensures that the needs of the Public Service are on the agenda of line-function SETAs (South Africa, 2006).

The Public Service Commission has an overall mandate to brace the public service for sustained, effective service and, in this process, monitors and evaluates a set of principles related to human

resource management practice. This calls for the need to cultivate good human resource management and career development practices that maximise human potential (Diphofa, 2005).

### **Career management**

The South African Public Service has adopted the human resources strategy concept and has developed a HRD Strategy that builds on the foundation of not only the HRD Strategy for South Africa but also on the National Skills Development Strategy. The development of this HRD Strategy is one of various promulgations of government policies and white papers related to human resources development in the Public Service and reflects the priority attention given at the highest level to human resource management since the dawn of a new political dispensation in 1994. These policies and papers also give prominence to career management as part of human resource development (Hartzenberg, 2002; Public Service Commission, 2000). A section of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, advocates the need for effective career management in the Public Service by referring to the cultivation of good human resource management and career development practices as one of the basic values and principles governing public administration and as a means to maximize human potential (South Africa, 1996).

The HRD Strategy for the Public Service is further guided by a combination of several public service policies, for example the *White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997*. It aims to ensure that human resource management in the Public Service becomes a model of excellence, in which the management of people is seen as everyone's responsibility and is conducted in a professional manner (South Africa, 2006).

The HRD Strategy for the Public Service (South Africa, 2006) identifies the challenges of human resource development as follows: provision of high quality service delivery, retaining of effective managers and people with scarce skills, coping with limited resources, the impact of HIV/AIDS resulting in a loss of skilled people, an overall under-performance of the workplace and *integration of career and life goals*. It acknowledges that there is poor career planning and little or no integration of career plans with life goals, with the result that employees tend to job-hop.

In a report by the Public Service Commission on career management, the latter concept was defined as the procedures linked to a performance management system which acknowledged career planning (i.e., identifying goals), career pathing (i.e., the route to attain these goals), career development (i.e., a continuous process) and job description (i.e., providing of career information into competence, knowledge, skills and experience) as common elements involving both the employee and employer. The position of the employer was defined in terms of various role players: the career manager (who conducts personnel surveys), the career planner (who plans the careers of individuals' by means of interviews) and the supervisors (who nominate the subordinate for skills training). The latter implies up-to-date knowledge of jobs, training and development opportunities as well as the creation of a culture of learning (Public Service Commission, 2000).

The report concluded that the concept of career management is relatively alien to the Public Service. On face value departments and provincial administrations seem to approach career management incoherently through various human resource management practices (Public Service Commission, 2000). Through individual discussions with various representatives of the DPSA on the current situation it would appear that no follow up on career management programmes has taken place. This situation should be viewed against what is reflected in a recently released report by the Public Service Commission, namely that, although a good institutional base has been created and a progressive policy framework has been developed, the Public Service still needs to grapple with completing, consolidating and monitoring compliance with the broader public management framework. Specifically with regards to human resource development, it was reported that the transformation of the human resource management regime has provided for increased decentralisation and delegation of authority. However, there is a sense that in some instances that consideration should be given to holding back on these delegations until appropriate capacity has been developed (Dihpofa, 2005).

*(Does the way in which public employment services are organised assist workforce development as effectively as it could? What is the role, and what should be the role, of career development services in modern public employment services? What should be the role of the education sector? What should be the role of private employment services be? What policy safe-guards should be put in place for the expansion of this sector? How should career development services be funded, given that they contribute to both private, organisational and public policy goals? )*

Prior to the democratization of South Africa in 1994, the human resource management practices in the Public Service placed no emphasis on the development and implementation of career management programs or practices within its service. For instance, the Department of Manpower provided career guidance services that included career adjustment services (career guidance and psychotherapeutic interventions) for Government officials who experienced problems in their jobs in the Public Service. The Dept of Labour (DOL) was radically restructured and discontinued career guidance, devolving it to each Government Department as Employee Assistance Programs. The DOL discontinued the publication of a career directory and self-help pamphlets which had previously been accessible to all citizens including public servants. The DOL aligned its services with the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy and now focuses on social development projects, the training of unemployed people for placement into these projects and the integration of life skills training into these programs (World Bank, 2003).

The Department of Labour provides labour market information in the form of Sector Skills Plans and Provincial Skills Plans. While these are publicly available, the information is not readily accessible to the general public. There has been a need identified to develop coherent policies on the Department of Labour's role in the development and provision of career information and counselling in the future (World Bank, 2003).

### **Provision and accessibility of career development services in the Public Service**

At the turn of the millennium, an investigation by the Public Service Commission regarding the status of career management practices in the Public Service revealed that of the 26 national departments and eight provincial administrations investigated formal career management programmes have only been implemented in three national departments. A number of national departments indicated that they were in the process of developing career management programmes but there has been no follow up to reflect the current status (Public Service Commission, 2000).

The issues regarded as contributing factors prohibiting the development of career management programmes are: outdated organisational structures; decentralisation; national policy not stipulating a time-frame; its provision within a multitude of other human resource development policies; and the need to develop human resource policies that would support career management and the implementation of Public Service Regulations (Public Service Commission, 2000).

In the absence of formal career management programmes the investigation revealed that career management is implemented by employees, by the employer, by managers in an informal manner, as part of systems designed to enhance competence and evaluate potential, *through career counselling provided by the human resource development component*, as part of a mentor or protégé programme, and by completing and signing career path agreements. Concerning career counselling by the HRD component, it was argued that, although career counselling is a necessary and integral part of a career management program, career counsellors are not in all instances familiar with the career development needs (i.e., training and performance) of an employee in his or her current position. Therefore interaction between the employee and supervisor becomes an absolute requirement (Public Service Commission, 2000).

The HRD Strategy for the Public Service regards the HR professional as responsible in facilitating the development and implementation of plans for the personal development of staff, and that career planning and development is a self-directed activity of the employee (South Africa, 2006). However, no direct

reference is made to the role of career development and the acquisition of career practice competence as such.

In discussions with representatives of the Public Service and Administration (6 March 2006, personal communication), it was reiterated that HR Development and Management, and for that matter career development and the development of career information systems, are decentralised to each government department. Training (i.e., the enhancement of identified competence, e.g. for career guidance) and/or the establishment of formal career development programs could be formally directed by the Department of Public Administration and its establishment overseen by a steering committee. However, a strong “business case” or need should be identified or made visible. It should be championed - ideally by the heads of various departments to induce the institutionalising of career development practises formally,

The Department of Public Service Administration (6 March 2006, personal communication) continuously generates guidelines and documents to augment career management and development practices in the public service. It is expected of each department to incorporate and manage these directives and guidelines accordingly. Although such guidelines and frameworks are available to all employees, for instance they are published on the internet; it is not readily accessible for employees in terms of directing and planning their careers. For example, sometimes the information is too technical and needs the translation or interpretation of HR experts.

Another factor that should be recognized in the provision of career development services to all public servants is that about 14% of the total work force of the public service are in lower level appointments, of which the majority are low literate or illiterate (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006). South Africa has a legacy of some 9.4 million adults (of a total population of about 43 million) with less than nine years of schooling (as reported in 1996). The policy on Adult Basic Education Training, with its aim of raising literacy levels and supporting the National Skills Development Strategy, also recognises the importance on lifelong learning. The ABET policy specifically addresses career management skills (as part of life orientation) in the curriculum and thus connects career development and workforce development as public policy (Department of Education, 1997). A guideline on the career development for lower-graded workers, according to a study commissioned by the Department of Public Service and Administration, is that a career development framework should be established that will also focus on human resource development complimentary to their employment conditions (South Africa, 2006).

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# United Kingdom

**Topics covered:**

Human capital  
Career development services for workforce development  
The information base for public policy making

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## The UK context

Policy making and government in the UK has many of the features of a country with a federal system. In 1999/2000 certain powers, including those covering education and training, were devolved to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which now have their own administrations: the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales. With a population approaching 60 million<sup>1</sup>, the United Kingdom is one of the larger countries in the OECD. Devolution provides the means for greater autonomy in different parts of the UK.

These similar, yet differing, arrangements partly reflect the geography, culture, complexity and relative population sizes of the regions; they are also linked to differences in the legal and constitutional responsibilities, as described above. Crucially, in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, careers companies deliver an all-age service, whereas in England different institutional arrangements apply for services delivered to young people and adults, i.e. Connexions and nextstep services. The delivery of publicly-funded employment services in England, Scotland and Wales is the responsibility of the UK Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and is managed across the three countries by Jobcentre Plus, whilst in Northern Ireland similar, but separate, arrangements apply. Details of the institutional arrangements for the delivery of lifelong guidance in the UK are given in Appendix 1, highlighting the complex and varied situation that applies across the four constituent countries.

Despite these quasi-federal arrangements, lifelong learning, workforce development and social inclusion are principles that are central to all current UK policy on learning and skills, irrespective of the separate policies emanating from the devolved administrations and the UK parliament. The targets specified in each separate nation's skills strategy<sup>2</sup> include those relating to increasing qualification levels, increasing participation in post-compulsory education, and increasing participation in workforce development. The key objectives include supporting individuals to achieve their ambitions through better information, advice and guidance, tackling the obstacles that people face in accessing training and jobs, and encouraging the role that employers and trades unions play in addressing skills and training needs.

## The labour market context

In August 2005, the number of people in employment in the UK reached 28.76 million. This is the highest figure since comparable records began in 1971. However, although registered UK unemployment rates are low, there are labour and skills shortages, with pockets of very high levels of unemployment or economic inactivity in particular geographical areas and social groups. Unemployment remains high for older workers, people lacking educational and vocational qualifications, disabled people, black and minority groups and residents of deprived and poor neighbourhoods. A study by the Employment Policy Institute for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>3</sup> found that during the preceding 20 years there had been a marked increase in non-activity among men aged 50 and over, whereas women were becoming more economically active as a group.

The UK has a growing, if ageing, population: in mid-2004 this stood at 59.8 million people, and for the past 100 years there have been more births than deaths in the UK. Since the late 1990s an additional and increasingly important factor in population growth has been net migration from abroad, including, recently, migration from the new EU member-states.

## Themes 1 & 4: Human capital and career development services for workforce development Policy recognition

The UK government recognises the impact of global change on the demand for skills and the need to improve the skills of its workforce.<sup>4</sup> Policy-makers highlight intensifying international competition, accelerating technological change and changing patterns of consumer expectations as increasing the demand for higher-level skills. This is consistent with human capital theory<sup>5</sup> which emphasises the importance of increasing individuals' knowledge, creativity and innovative flair as a critical means of

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<sup>1</sup> Of the total population, around 5.1 million live in Scotland, 3 million in Wales, and 1.7 million in Northern Ireland. Some 84% of the population, then, lives in England.

<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland - [http://www.delni.gov.uk/skills\\_strategy\\_2006.pdf](http://www.delni.gov.uk/skills_strategy_2006.pdf) ;  
Wales - <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/c5104-seap-report-e.pdf> ;  
Scotland:- <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w7/sfs-00.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Gregg, P. & Wadsworth, J. (1998) *Unemployment and Non-employment: Unpacking Economic Activity*. London: Employment Policy Institute.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A72/61/81.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Becker, G. (1975) *Human Capital Theory: a Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

gaining competitive economic advantage. Current policies in the UK focus both upon developing human capital and upon promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, emphasis is placed on increasing investment in physical capital, promoting research and development, and strengthening competition within and across organisations. The latter is important because human capital theory can sometimes overlook the contribution to competitiveness made by factors such as investment, changes in work organisation, consensus-based industrial relations and new managerial approaches.<sup>6</sup>

### Publicly-funded services

Whilst the arrangements for publicly-funded career development services<sup>7</sup> vary across the four UK nations, all recognise the critical importance of workforce development and all are seeking to find the most effective way of delivering both universal and targeted services. In reviewing these arrangements, the UK team identified specific examples as summarised below.

One of Careers Scotland's strategic aims<sup>8</sup> is to develop people who are in work. Careers Scotland is part of, and therefore funded through, the Enterprise Networks (Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise) where there is strategic emphasis placed on effective career planning, designed to help individuals achieve career progression, increase their long-term employability, and reduce the risk of skills becoming obsolete. In addition, Careers Scotland has explicitly formulated a differentiated service delivery model to help target its available resources to individuals and employers.

In Wales, there exists a highly acclaimed interactive website provided by Careers Wales Online<sup>9</sup>. This offers young people and adults scope to create and self-manage their own personalised 'e-portfolio'. The website also informs and supports employers and those working in education and training on a wide range of career development and workforce development issues.

In Northern Ireland, 'Workforce Development Forums' are currently being established as part of the Department for Employment & Learning's (DEL) Skills Strategy. This work is parallel to a project designed to establish an independent all-age Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (EIAG) strategy. It will ensure that the mechanisms are in place to enable Careers EIAG to be based on up-to-date labour market information. Through better-informed decision-making, the project is aimed at encouraging increased participation in education, training and employment. It will be taken forward in conjunction with the Department of Education (DoE) and other key stakeholders.

In England, a government inter-departmental review of information, advice and guidance (IAG)<sup>10</sup> services for adults has been launched, underpinned by a research and analysis phase, to help examine current infrastructure and delivery arrangements. As part of this review process, information, advice and guidance for adults within the workplace are currently being explored.

A UK-wide example is the University for Industry (Ufi) learndirect helpline. This is marketed nationally, has a single telephone number, and is subject to a four-nation agreement to offer minimum common standards of service. It was established in 1998 as an information and advice service; since then, it has operated within an integrated service delivery model linking with local information, advice and guidance providers. The number of calls taken has remained stable at around one million annually, and satisfaction levels have remained consistently high (at more than 90%).<sup>11</sup> In Scotland, the contract is held by the Scottish University for Industry (SUfi), which is separate from Ufi. In England, a major pilot has recently been launched to extend the service to offer more intensive, personalised guidance, directed at those returning from career breaks and those aiming at Level 3<sup>12</sup> qualifications. This is currently being promoted through a highly publicised TV marketing campaign. The expansion of this

<sup>6</sup> Coffield, F. (ed.) (1999) *Speaking Truth to Power: Research and Policy on Lifelong Learning*. Bristol: Policy Press.

<sup>7</sup> "Career development services" is not normally used in the UK; the terms "career guidance services" and "careers advisory services" are more common.

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Executive (2004). *A Smart Successful Scotland – Strategic Directions to the Enterprise Networks and an Enterprise Strategy for Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

<sup>9</sup> Careers Wales Online website: <http://www.careerswales.com>

<sup>10</sup> In the UK, the term "information, advice and guidance (IAG)" is normally used to describe a range of services that elsewhere are often collectively known as "guidance"; in the UK, "guidance" is often (but not always) reserved to describe the more intensive support element of IAG. The term "counselling" is normally used within a therapeutic or clinical context. Those delivering counselling services are generally viewed as a specialised profession separate to those delivering career guidance.

<sup>11</sup> In the UK, work-related competence-based qualifications are well established. They assess the skills that individuals demonstrate at work and are available at five levels, from level 1 – for routine jobs – to level 5 – for jobs with complex tasks and substantial responsibility. (Extract taken from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority).

<sup>12</sup> Watts, A.G. & Dent, G. (2006) The 'P' word: productivity in the delivery of career guidance services. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 34(2), 177-189.

service creates opportunities for policy-makers and Ufl developers to test out the feasibility of service delivery using an ICT-based solution. However, an important issue is the extent to which ICT-based delivery can be optimally blended with face-to-face interventions, taking into account individuals' varied needs and preferred learning styles. The findings will feed into the review of information, advice and guidance services for adults in England. The differing policy contexts in which this service operates will strongly influence the future development of the service.

The UK government is committed to a policy of social inclusion through a process of welfare to work. Given this commitment, and the need to make best use of public funds, public employment services in the UK have a particular focus upon those who are unemployed and/or those with low educational attainment. For example, the main UK-wide public employment service, Jobcentre Plus, was launched in April 2002 by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), across the whole of the United Kingdom, to bring together the Employment Service and parts of the Benefits Agency that deliver services to working age people. Jobcentre Plus aims to help more people into work and employers to fill their vacancies, and to provide people of working age with the help and support to which they are entitled. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also offers a national Jobseekers website designed to encourage access to a wide range of services, including career development information and advice, located within a centralised ICT resource base<sup>13</sup>; more recently, it has piloted on a small-scale basis 'skills coaching', designed to support unemployed adults into education and/ or work. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his March 2006 budget speech, announced the intention to double the number of skills coaching pilots, with a specific emphasis on helping low-skilled women return to work.

The UK's strategy for workforce development has been further strengthened by the establishment of the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and affiliated Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)<sup>14</sup>. In most cases, Sector Skills Agreements are now in place and twelve SSCs have made a formal commitment to producing labour market information for careers services. In a few cases, SSCs are offering careers information, advice and guidance to those seeking to work in the sector. The main purpose of these UK organisations is to engage employers more fully in the skills agenda and to improve the linkage between the demand and supply side of workforce development.

In England, the Leitch Review of Skills<sup>15</sup> will report on how skills and employment policy can better complement each other. Further and higher education institutions are well placed to contribute to the development of a highly skilled and well qualified workforce. Significant funding incentives have been provided to encourage them to develop their services and partnerships with industry, commerce and public services. For example, the Welsh Development Agency and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales have established a joint initiative to support institutions' development of placement and other career-related programmes designed to improve graduate employability. Funding has been made available to encourage and reward institutions undertaking contract research, consultancy and training, thereby encouraging closer links with industry and contributing to the future prosperity of Wales.

## Employer-based provision

In the UK, it is widely recognised that employers play an important role in delivering career development services in the workplace. Recent market research by MORI<sup>16</sup> has shown that one in three adults received information through this means; most of this related to the user's current job, but one-quarter related to a future job. The findings indicate that many individuals look to their employers for support in relation to career development and progression. An evaluation of Employer Training Pilots<sup>17</sup>, which is about to be officially extended and reframed as 'Train to Gain', showed that the majority of learners (71%) agreed strongly that employers should give internal career guidance; a further 26% tended to agree. Research undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES)<sup>18</sup> offers more detailed evidence of the kind of career support which good managers can give their staff.<sup>19</sup> Some major

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<sup>13</sup> [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)

<sup>15</sup> HM Treasury (2005) *Skills in the UK: the Long-Term Challenge: Interim Report*. London: Stationery Office.

<sup>16</sup> The Guidance Council (2005) *Demand for, and Perceptions of, Information Advice and Guidance*. Leicester: Guidance Council.

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Platform for Progression: Employer Training Pilots: Year 2 Evaluation Report*. Sheffield: DfES.

<sup>18</sup> Hirsh W., Silverman M., Tamkin P., & Jackson C. (2004) *Managers as Developers of Others*. IES Report 407. Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies, University of Sussex.

<sup>19</sup> Hirsh, W., & Jackson, C. (2004) *Managing Careers in Large Organisations*, London: The Work Foundation.

employers offer more formal career support to their own employees.<sup>20</sup> Far more give personalised career attention to senior managers and 'talent pools' but now to all employees. So far, there has been very limited public funding to support the development of services for employees in the workplace.

Career development at work is problematic for managers and HR professionals in large organisations.<sup>21</sup> A Chartered Institute of Personnel Development survey<sup>22</sup> indicated a desire to improve career development for all employees, but in practice showed most effort went into a relatively small group of senior or high potential employees. Only a quarter of respondents had a strategy for career development for employees and only a third felt that senior managers were committed to career management activities. It concluded that, for career development in companies to be most effective, they must be driven by a committed senior manager(s).

Bysshe & Hirsh<sup>23</sup> in a recent overview of formalised career development and learning support in the workplace<sup>24</sup> found that this currently includes:

- *Formalised in-house career management and development programmes* (which are a well-established feature in a number of larger organisations).
- *Union Learning Representatives* ('front-line' support that can be provided in unionised workplaces).
- *Learning/training provider support* (e.g. provided by assessors/trainers who are supporting work-based learning, including apprenticeships).
- *Information, advice and guidance providers*: This includes publicly-funded career and employment services (e.g. nextstep) as well as private sector provision (e.g. career coaching).
- *Outplacement/progression support* (e.g. support in redundancy situations is extensively available through outplacement; in the context of the Armed Services, extensive resettlement provision is available).

In England, Scotland and Wales, the launch of the Union Learning Fund has been a major catalyst for the development of the role of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) in the workplace. There are around 12,000 trained ULRs working across all sectors and at all skill levels. The Trade Union Congress (TUC) anticipates that by 2010 there will be a network of 22,000<sup>25</sup> ULRs. The key functions of the Union Learning Representative are set out in the Employment Act 2002<sup>26</sup>, which gave the role a statutory basis.

## Market-based provision

Current public policy remains ambivalent about market-based provision in career development services. Measures to encourage market-based provision have, so far, been limited. In England, a key objective is to achieve a 'step change' in the use made of the information, advice and guidance infrastructure and to help many more individuals, including employers. This focuses attention on the extent to which a significant part of career development support should operate through a market-based approach in which services are purchased by individuals or by employers on behalf of their employees. There are three possible policy roles that government could adopt: (i) stimulating the market in order to build and strengthen its capacity; (ii) regulating the market and assuring the quality of services, both to protect the public interest and to build consumer confidence; (iii) compensating for market failure where this is appropriate. Such a market-based approach presents certain risks to policy-makers, including the issue of consumer protection, ensuring consistent quality of provision, and the potential exposure of government to criticism should the market not deliver. This is a key issue for the current policy review.

## Key challenges

The ongoing challenges to be addressed in order to ensure career development services are a major contributor to workforce development include:

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<sup>20</sup> Hirsh, W., Silverman, M., Tamkin, P. & Jackson, C. (2004) *Managers as Developers of Others*. IES Report 407. Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies.

<sup>21</sup> Hirsh, W., Jackson, C., & Kidd, J. (2001) *Straight Talking: Effective Career Discussions at Work*. NICEC Project Report. Cambridge: CRAC.

<sup>22</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2003) *Managing Employee Careers*. London: CIPD.

<sup>23</sup> Extract drawn from Bysshe, S. & Hirsh, W (2006) IAG and workforce development. Paper prepared for DfES Consultation Event, Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby, 3 March.

<sup>24</sup> There is very limited research on the actual extent, nature and effectiveness of much of this provision.

<sup>25</sup> Trades Union Congress (2005) *Learning and Organising - Union Strength through the Learning Agenda*. London: TUC ([www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)).

<sup>26</sup> The Act gives rights to paid time off for ULRs provided they are in independent unions and are in workplaces where unions are recognised for collective bargaining purposes.

- The development and use of common terminology among key stakeholders is needed to ensure closer alignment to key policy and institutional goals and to help create more coherent and consistent career development services for individuals within and outside the workplace.
- There is a need for greater recognition of differing and potentially competing agendas from the employer/ employee and government policy perspectives. Linked to this is the desirability of finding ways of integrating these contrasting perspectives so that all round mutual advantage can be achieved.
- The practice of workforce and career development in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is different to that in large organisations, and this presents a number of challenges. Smaller companies are typically very lean; career ladders - where they exist - are often short. A consistent finding from surveys of training activity is that smaller firms are less likely than larger firms to provide formal training.<sup>27</sup> Whilst all organisations face barriers to workforce development, for many small firms the concern with ensuring short-term survival is much more acute.<sup>28</sup>
- The role of government is to create the conditions to ensure that both individuals and employers embrace the benefits of career development and ensure that targeted support is delivered in the most effective way. It is important that this process is underpinned by clear and robust conceptual models that clarify the complex inter-relationships between the individual, business-development and wider workforce-development agendas.
- There is a need to strengthen the links between professional associations and employers' groups so that innovative approaches to career development and workforce development can be fostered, with attention to how this relates to the training of careers professionals.

### **Theme 5: The information base for public policy making**

The two International Symposia held in 1999 and in 2001 highlighted the critical importance of developing a stronger evidence base to inform and support policy decisions at a national and international level. Since then, a number of positive outcomes have emerged designed to develop strategies for a more sustainable evidence base for careers work.

On a UK-wide basis, a national review of performance indicators and benchmarks in career guidance<sup>29</sup> highlighted that providers collect a wealth of information covering all of the main aspects of the services they provide. This information is particularly rich in capturing aspects of delivery, including volumes of service interventions and penetration of services in targeted population groups. Data on service outcomes is also collected, usually in terms of work and education/training outcomes and/or user satisfaction ratings. One area where there is little evidence available is that concerning the unit costs of information, advice and guidance delivery; there is even less evidence of any reporting of the relationship between the costs of delivery and the outcomes of delivery.

In Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise, the Futureskills Scotland (FSS) initiative includes within its aims the enhancement and analysis of labour market information to inform policy-making. FSS has developed Research Online<sup>30</sup>, the first service in the UK that gives free on-line access to reports on the labour market.

In 2004, Careers Scotland published the results of a research project (undertaken by Inter-Ed Ltd) to establish whether there is any evidence of linkage between career goals and educational attainment. The findings indicated that pupils at S3 to S6 stage (aged 15 to 17) who have career goals are consistently: (i) more committed to engaging with school work than those with no career goals; (ii) more able to link the relevance of school study to life beyond school; (iii) more personally ambitious; and (iv) outperforming others in terms of academic attainment. The findings held true across all levels of academic ability and socio-economic groups. The key message is that having a career goal motivates young people to apply themselves to learning which they then see as relevant to achieving their goal. In Wales, a team of quality-assurance managers from all six Careers Wales companies have worked closely with university researchers to assess and measure the effectiveness of careers work with adults.

<sup>27</sup> Skills Task Force (2000) *Skills for All: Research Report from the National Skills Task Force*. London: DfEE.

<sup>28</sup> Westhead, P. & Storey, D.J. (1997) *Training Provision and the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses*. RR 26. London: DfEE.

<sup>29</sup> Hughes, D. & Gration, G. (2005) *Indicators and Benchmarks in Careers Guidance – UK Summary Report*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.researchonline.org.uk>

The team designed, developed and successfully implemented a survey involving the tracking of 1,000 adults three and six months following careers guidance interventions. The policy significance of this in-house approach to evaluation approach is its potential to provide an effective way of driving up evidence-based practice within provider organisations, and of ensuring ownership of the results so that they can feed into established quality assurance systems. In parallel to this tracking exercise, the Careers Wales companies in partnership with the National Assembly have recently piloted performance indicators (PIs) for careers work, focusing on differing types of career interventions with differing client groups, including work with employers.

In England, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned in 2003 a five-year longitudinal study<sup>31</sup> designed to investigate the nature of effective guidance and how over the longer-term it can add value to post-compulsory learning and enhance employability. The DfES also commissioned a longitudinal telephone survey<sup>32</sup> of over 4,000 recipients of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services in England to test out whether the provision of IAG makes a difference to the work and learning outcomes of individuals by tracking them over time.

In Northern Ireland, a national review of careers education, information, advice and guidance is being conducted, specifically linked to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Skills Strategy. In March 2006, the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in conjunction with the Department of Education (DoE) brought together key stakeholders for a two-day 'Futuresearch' Conference. This was the first such conference to be jointly held by these two separate Departments.

Other key relevant policy initiatives include:

- A National Guidance Policy Forum (NGPF) has been established, to bring together policy-makers and other key bodies from across the UK. This provides an opportunity to review at a strategic level the existing structures for collaboration, co-operation and co-ordination of career development services across the UK.
- A Government inter-departmental review of information, advice and guidance services for adults has been launched in England underpinned by a research and analysis phase examining current infra-structure and delivery arrangements. Alongside this, a new set of national quality standards are being developed for young people aged 13 -19 years old.
- A National Resource Service has been set up to provide a centralised resource base for practitioners working with adults in the information advice and guidance field.
- A National Guidance Research Forum (NGRF) website<sup>33</sup> has been developed, designed to bring policy, practice and research in careers work closer together.
- A National Library Resource for Guidance<sup>34</sup> has been established, which holds over 10,000 online, catalogued historical and contemporary research literature.

## Key challenges

The ongoing challenges to be addressed to develop the necessary information base to support public policy-making include:

- The requirement to use Labour Market Information (LMI) more effectively. While it is recognised that accurate, current LMI underpins quality careers provision, questions still remain about: (i) what level of information is required and in what form; (ii) who collects it and how is it disseminated; (iii) how currency of information is maintained; (iv) what the relationship is between national and local LMI; (v) how best to develop relationships in local areas to ensure accurate and up-to-date local LMI; and (vi) the role of practitioners in the mediation of LMI.
- The need for more systematic and comprehensive information to assess how the right balance can be achieved between providing high-quality centralised 'critical mass' resources and localised client-centred services, whilst at the same time avoiding incoherence and fragmentation at the point of delivery.

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<sup>31</sup> The project is led by Jenny Bimrose, Institute for Employment Research (IER), University of Warwick, in association with the Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS), University of Derby, and the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC).

<sup>32</sup> Tyers, C. & Sinclair, A. (2005) *Intermediate Impact of Advice and Guidance*. RR 638. London: DfES.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.guidance-research.org>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.derby.ac.uk/nlrg/>

- The need to improve the research evidence relating to the effectiveness of different strategies for workforce development, particularly within the workplace, given that much of the current research within the UK has not specifically addressed career development in the workplace.

## Conclusion

Devolution has provided opportunities for innovation and experimentation and has resulted in differences both in terms of public policy and practice. However, it has also created levels of uncertainty, particularly in relation to where best to strategically locate career development services that currently operate within both enterprise, education and training and social inclusion policy goals. There is a need for a sustained programme of activity to develop:

- a clearer understanding of the evidence base, particularly in relation to building the business case for developing effective career interventions in the workplace;
- a coherent training programme to underpin and develop the competence and capability of those involved in the delivery of career development interventions;
- a consistent approach to raising the profile of 'career', and its potential for actively supporting the UK skills and competitiveness agenda.

## Appendix: Glossary of key publicly-funded career development services in the UK

*Careers Scotland:* Careers Scotland provides free careers information, advice and guidance to the people of Scotland - whatever their age, background or circumstances. The service is part of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise set up by Scottish legislation in 1990. The two enterprise organisations operate in terms of two separate systems and procedures and each is managed by its own Chief Executive. However, both organisations have a common national brand, and operate according to common strategic objectives contributing to the economic well-being of Scotland. The strategic direction of the enterprise network is set out in *A Smart Successful Scotland: Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks*. Careers Scotland's activities and performance are mapped against the learning and skills targets of this document, the full version of which can be downloaded at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/enterprise/sss-00.asp>

*Careers Wales:* Careers Wales is the national brand for the all-age careers information, advice and guidance services funded by the National Assembly for Wales. Established on 1 April 2001, it combines the strengths and best practices of the six careers companies working in Wales. Careers Wales works with young people from the age of 11 (with some primary school work in Education Business Activities) upwards, and with adults, to provide them with the information, advice and guidance to help achieve their career development goals.

*Connexions:* Connexions is the government's support service for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England. It aims to provide integrated advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities for this group and to help them make a smooth transition to adulthood and working life. Connexions is delivered through local partnerships covering the same geographical areas as the Learning and Skills Councils (LSC).

*EGSA (Educational Guidance Service for Adults):* EGSA is a major player in delivering adult educational guidance services throughout Northern Ireland. It is a 'company limited by guarantee', recognised by the Inland Revenue as having charitable status. In 2004, the majority of its income was provided by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in Northern Ireland.

*Jobcentre Plus:* Jobcentre Plus was launched in April 2002, across the whole of the United Kingdom, to bring together the Employment Service and parts of the Benefits Agency that delivered services to working age people. Jobcentre Plus aims to help more people into work and employers to fill their vacancies, and to provide people of working age with the help and support to which they are entitled.

*Learndirect:* Learndirect operates a network of more than 2,000 online learning centres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland providing access to a range of e-learning opportunities. It also provides a national telephone helpline and website for adults wishing to access integrated information, advice and guidance on opportunities for learning and employment. Learndirect Advice is the information and advice service brand for England. In Scotland, Learndirect services are delivered by the Scottish University for Industry (SUfi). SUfi was established by the Scottish Executive as a private limited company in 2000. It became a non-departmental public body, responsible to Scottish Ministers, in April 2005, and retains its private limited company status. It provides a telephone helpline and website in Scotland for adults

wishing to access integrated information, advice and guidance on opportunities for learning and employment. Close working links have been established between Careers Scotland and SUfl, including a 'memorandum of understanding' which covers cross-referral of customers, reciprocal use of databases, and exploring possibilities for collaboration in call centre activities. Currently, Careers Scotland has a national number routed to its careers centres, and is also planning to pilot a call centre approach in one region of the Scottish Enterprise area.

*Nextstep:* Nextstep is the brand name for local face-to-face information and advice (IA) services funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There is a nextstep service in each of the 47 local LSC areas in England, with a total of 592 subcontractors who are responsible for managing the delivery of IA services and targets through the co-ordination of a network of sub-contractors. These networks typically include: colleges of further education, voluntary and community organisations, trades union representation, and some employers.

*Northern Ireland Careers Service:* The Northern Ireland Careers Service operates within the Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL), Skills and Industry Division. It offers an all-age careers guidance service throughout the province. Its mission is "to assist economic and social development in Northern Ireland by enabling clients to make informed, realistic and sound decisions about their futures" and "to ensure equality of service to young people and adults within an open and responsive, progressive and innovative culture". Careers advisers are based in Careers Offices, Job Centres, and Jobs and Benefit Offices.





# United States of America

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Employability skills

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**Topic covered:**  
Career development services for workforce development

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**Topic covered:**  
Older workers

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## **Pioneering Work, Evolution and Research, Practice and Policy Implications Related to Employability Skills (ES)**

Employability Skills (ES) encompass knowledge and ability in seeking, maintaining and succeeding in employment. This paper reviews pioneering and current aspects of ES, as well as research, practice and policy implications.

Hartz studied skills and knowledge related to vocational education students securing and maintaining employment, resulting in the Employability Skills Program (Hartz, 1976) and the Employability Inventory (EI): Findings and Analyses (Hartz, Steele, Stephy, & Smisko, 1978). Key findings in Hartz's out-of-circulation resources noted important job seeking skills and knowledge, such as opportunity identification, resume and letter writing, interviewing skills, and prospective employee characteristics manifest in the Boy Scout Oath, "trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent".

### **Evolution**

Hartz's 1975 findings parallel over 1600 recent ES investigations and publications in many U.S. states, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Ironically, Hartz's work was not listed in any of the more than 800 documents cited in ERIC and 800 Google sources discovered in Spring 2006 electronic searches, possibly supporting Riegel's (1979) premise that credit goes to those who popularize an idea, rather than to originators of concepts. Intensive study of materials in all media led Hartz to Bolles' then brand new and now landmark book, *What Color is Your Parachute?* (2006), as the single best ES resource available, and sales bear out its durability.

Measurement and Learning: Foster (1979) formally investigated assessing knowledge acquired in a high school employability skills training program using the EI, concluding that the EI differentiated between low-scorers and high-scorers, and participants increased their knowledge of employability skills. Thus, a case can be made for teaching and measuring ES.

While much ES content matter has remained constant, the global economy, technological advances and increasing frequency of job changes have yielded an evolving sense of ES, manifest in electronic searches and, most notably, a need for individual career ownership and stewardship.

### **Current Status and Recent Emphases**

Surprisingly, current ES literature reflects similarity to Hartz's 1975 findings in the areas of identifying and seeking jobs and personal characteristics. More recent changes emanate largely from the global economy, major advances in technology, and refined study and articulation of ES, perhaps, most notably, Learning to Learn and using electronic search resources. In addition to refinements in ES content and processes, recent efforts also have concentrated on formal national workforce and education initiatives, such as the U.S. Labor Secretary's Commission on Necessary Skills (SCANS), Canada's Employability Skills 2000+, the UK's Higher Education Initiatives, and Australia's emphasis on skills and knowledge needed by businesses.

One Typical Employability Competency Model encompassing many aspects of international attention to ES contains the SCANS competencies developed by representatives of some of the United States' largest companies. SCANS Competencies are grouped in 8 Areas, 3 sets of Basic Competencies and Traits that constitute the foundation for 5 Additional Competency areas.

#### **THREE PART FOUNDATION COMPETENCIES**

Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks.

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reason.

Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty

#### **FIVE ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES**

Resources: Identifies, Organizes, Plans, and Allocates Resources

Time

Money

Material and Facilities

Human Resources

Interpersonal: Works With Others

Participates as Member of a Team

Teaches Others New Skills

Serves Clients/Customers

Exercises Leadership

Negotiates

Works with Diversity

Information: Acquires and Uses Information

Acquires and Evaluates Information

Organizes and Maintains Information

Interprets and Communicates Information

Uses Computers to Process Information

Systems: Understands Complex Interrelationships

Understands Systems

Monitors and Corrects Performance

Improves or Designs Systems

Technology: Works with a Variety of Technologies

Selects Technology

Applies Technology to Task

Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment

A Single Employability Imperative: Of all the ES, none seems more important than the “Thinking skill” of learning to learn, following a continuum ranging from: Basic Study Skills in reading, note taking, studying and related activities; to philosophical inquiry and wonder. Because knowledge increases at an unprecedented rate and scope today, merely learning what one's teachers know, yields knowledge that is perishable and at risk of obsolescence. Hence, one must learn to learn, for effective work in a high skills, high wage economy.

Educational and Labor Policy: Wisconsin's Employability Skills Standards Program and the WES Certificate Program have 3 major components that reflect much of what is covered in the international efforts mentioned earlier, emphasizing: 1: SCANS skills, 2. a cooperative worksite-based (work released), school-supervised educational experience and 3. an individual career plan. Correlations of School Dropout and crime statistics constitute powerful negative reinforcers as incentives for government ES policy; and workforce needs in a high-skills economy mandate curricular and governmental attention to ES as a top priority.

### **Age Differences and Implications**

Career education models afford fundamental insights into seriatim, incremental aspects of how educators, employers and governments approach employability skills, starting with helping youngsters expand horizons and see near and long term relevance of work they do at home as well as school work. Adult ES needs would seem more similar to than different from standard educational settings ES, with assessment as a means of tailoring ES programs for adults.

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, individual career ownership and stewardship seem the most basic and pervasive aspects of ES. A life-long, partially internal, protean career presents a means to encompass and channel ES needs and resources while assuaging current workforce turbulence. Seen in this light, one's career starts in duties and exposure to and experience with work, distribution of labor, and other life roles at home, accompanied by work habits, requirements and citizenship at school and then manifest in a variety of tasks, settings and roles throughout one's life. If each person has one career that is life-long, counselors and others need to help people see the importance of taking personal responsibility for individual career ownership and stewardship, manifest in future career planning, and balancing and integrating work roles and responsibilities with other life roles and responsibilities (e.g. family membership and citizenship).

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## **Career Development Services for Workforce Development**

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Although strengths exist within public and private employment services, there are a variety of service delivery issues confronting providers of career development services for workforce development. The strengths relate to available computerized resources for self-assessment and job placement. Job listings, while not an effective means of job searching, are available for clients and job search workshops can typically be readily accessed. Moreover, the government has developed resources such as O-NET that provides web-based career services to help clients learn about the world-of-work and to identify occupational options of interest. The issues or concerns related to the services provided relate to two primary areas: the model of career development being implemented and the training or professional level of the service providers.

### **A Narrow View of Career Interventions**

Due to limitations in the ways in which career development processes are conceptualized, public employment services are at best minimally effective at delivering comprehensive career services. In fact, I personally dislike the term “employment services” because it reflects a narrow view of career development and tends to ignore the career development tasks of crystallization and specification while forcing the focus on implementation. Most persons seek career services when they are either in or ready to embark upon a career transition. Inherent in transition experiences, including those related to work, is the task of redefining one’s identity or self-concept. Super (1957) noted that a career choice is the ‘implementation of one’s self-concept in an occupational role.’ Implementation without crystallization and specification is developmentally inappropriate and, in the long run, both inefficient and ineffective as a treatment strategy. Thus, too often, employment services providers ignore the proper developmental sequence related to the career intervention process. Skills related to effective listening, providing of support, and being able to collaboratively identify useful intervention strategies (identified as being essential to the effective career counseling of adults according to Anderson and Niles, 2000) are many times not reflected in the experience of the services provided to clients in public employment services.

The term “employment services” also often reflects a clerk mentality in service delivery in which the service provider acts almost like a sales clerk in a clothing store- but it is worse, the employment service provider often ignores the customer’s “size and clothing style preference” and attempts to fit the customer to the clothes available rather than vice versa. An effective sales clerk first asks the customer what s/he is looking for, gathers data, and then offers possibilities that address the customer’s expressed goals. In career services, however, we know that the concerns client’s express at intake often differ from the concerns they discuss in their subsequent career counseling. Thus, career services providers must often help their clients clarify their career concerns prior to discussing appropriate career interventions (Niles, Anderson, & Cover 2000).

### **Insufficient Training Support and Requirements**

The education sector does little to influence service delivery in public employment services. This is, I think, the root of the problem. There is little expectation or requirement for professional training in career services on the part of the employment services worker. There is a tremendous disconnect between the education sector and employment services. Service providers often lack credentials and training. Moreover, there is a lack of regulation relative to who delivers services. There are states in which the state licensing regulations pertaining to counselors and psychologists include the delivery of career services such as career assessment and career counseling. Although such regulatory bodies focus on private practitioners, there is a strong message communicated for public agencies when licensure laws include the provision of career services.

There have, however, been important and positive attempts on the part of the government to influence the quality of services in career services. For example, when the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) developed the Career Development Facilitator (CDF) it served as an attempt by a government agency to influence the education and training of people working in front-line

career services capacities such as employment centers. The goal was to provide basic and minimal competence that would enable the CDF to work competently under the supervision of a professional career counselor. Since its inception, the CDF has been acknowledged as a legitimate credential and training program for paraprofessionals providing career services.

If the CDF model were applied more widely in public employment services, with CDF's being supervised by a professional career counselor, then the impact of this attempt at professionalisation would be even more substantial. It is perhaps somewhat naïve to expect an agency to "police itself" but public employment services offices need to take responsibility for providing developmentally appropriate and professional career services. When a paraprofessional is providing services, that person should be working in conjunction with a person who is professional trained and credentialed.

Private employment services practitioners should possess the relevant training for the services they provide. "Career counseling" masquerading as coaching is unethical if the service provider does not possess the requisite training. Career services providers working privately and providing assessment and counseling-related career assistance should be licensed practitioners. Although this clearly does not guarantee a quality career counseling experience, it does provide consumers with some assurance that providers have received minimal training and supervision in the provision of career services.

Professional associations should also be engaged in the activity of lobbying legislators for the creation of counselor licensure laws that include the practice of career counseling and career assessment. Unfortunately, the career development domain has more than its fair share of persons providing career services with little or no professional training in career development. This is alarming given the influence of career experience on life satisfaction. There is perhaps no other area of living that is so influential in this regard, yet so unregulated relative to the professional level of the persons providing services.

Finally, to solidify government-sponsored funding in the areas of services (e.g., O-NET), service delivery settings (e.g., public employment services), professional training (e.g., access to CDF training), and career development research (e.g., research grant opportunities), career services practitioners need to be actively engaged in evaluating their services and communicating evaluation outcome data to stakeholders. Too often, career services practitioners see this activity as unnecessary but nothing could be further from the truth. In times when budgets are dwindling, communicating the importance, relevance, and effectiveness of career services is critical to maintaining funding. In funding support for advancing career development practice and theory, the United States is woefully inadequate.

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## Older Workers

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As with many special population programs in the United States, there appears to be little unity among the services that are provided to the older worker. Many of the public agency services, when available, focus only on older workers from an outplaced, downsized perspective (displaced workers), low income or other equally restrictive programs. One Stop Career Centers, the major public employment service model in the US, does not appear to provide service for the active older worker. As one author recently stated, "For an older worker or an older person wanting to return to work, these structures are remarkably silent and distant".

Given older Americans' desire to work beyond retirement age, their increased popularity among employers, and the projected increase in employment opportunities, the absence of career services targeted specifically toward this population leads to the conclusion that there is a structural lag between our institutional services and programs and the aging population in American. (Beatty, Vissor 2005). One ray of light for older worker program, services and advocacy revolves around AARP (American Association for Retired Persons).

AARP is the leading US organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older. Protecting and expanding older workers' rights was a founding principle of AARP and the organization continues to advocate for older workers at the federal and state court levels, before Congress and state legislatures, and before enforcement agencies. AARP works closely with other organizations seeking fair treatment for those in the workforce, as well as with employers to develop policies that enhance opportunities for, and eliminate discrimination against, the ever-increasing number of workers who stay on the job past age 55.

While career development associations, such as NCDCA, continue to communicate with AARP and try to find ways to work in collaboration with this huge organization, it is often frustrating that the primary avenue for research and policy directives comes from collaborative efforts between AARP and private companies that cater to the health care and financial concerns of the graying population. However, it is worthwhile to continue the dialogue and to continue encouraging the inclusion of career development professionals in the policies and strategies for effective labor force participation for those over the age of 55.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects continued increases in the participation of older persons. By 2012, BLS projects a participation rate of 65.1 percent for persons aged 55-64, up from 61.3 percent in July 2004. For persons aged 65 and older, BLS projects an increase in participation from 14.3 percent to 15.9 percent between July 2004 and 2012. By 2012, the oldest boomers will reach age 65, often considered the conventional retirement age. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects a continued workforce participation rate of 65.1 percent for persons aged 55-64 and or persons aged 65 and older, an increase in participation from 14.3 percent to 15.9 percent between July 2004 and 2012.

A recent AARP research study on 1,200 baby boomers found that about 80 percent plan to work in some capacity during their retirement years. Over half of these boomers, aged 38-57 at the time of the study, expect to work part time, and 15 percent say they plan to start their own businesses. AARP has identified several economic factors impacting older workers including:

- Inadequate retirement savings.
- Stagnating pension coverage and other benefit reductions leaving many workers with little or no pension protection.
- Cuts in retiree health benefits.
- The increase in the age of eligibility for full Social Security benefits and reduction in the size of the age 62 benefit.

Other factors contributing to the increase of workers remaining or returning to the workforce include:

- Higher education levels which educated workers more likely to stay in the labor force.
- Increased life expectancy and improved health status.
- Changes in the physical demands of many jobs.

- Labor shortages that may prompt employers to implement programs and policies to attract and retain older workers.

This last factor would appear to encourage career development researchers and practitioners to collaborate with human resource, organization and public policy makers. Together we could increase the options for older workers.

There are some American companies that are being proactive. AARP has a program for Best Employers for Workers Over 50 that honors companies and organizations whose practices and policies address the needs of an aging workforce. The selection criteria includes the employer's recruiting practices; opportunities for training, education, and career development; workplace accommodations; alternative work options, such as flexible scheduling; health and pension benefits; and the age of the workforce. These companies appear to address the stated needs of older workers.

Thus, more comprehensive, accessible, and prevalent career services are needed to address the needs of a growing population within the United States. Older workers are clear about their career concerns. They seek retirement jobs that provide flexibility, meaningful work, respect from those they work with, health benefits, the ability to learn new skills, the opportunity to meet new challenges, and the ability to interact with others. Career services providers need to work more collaboratively with other service providers such as mental health professionals, financial planners, and health care providers to address the concerns of older workers. Currently, the career services for older workers, when they are available at all, are disjointed and disconnected from services that support active and positive aging. Like career services in general within the United States, there is a lack of funding support from government to provide the foundation needed to address the needs of older workers.

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