Synthesis –Theme #2: Aims for, and access to, career development services

A synthesis of the perspectives of countries and international organisations attending the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy Symposium 2019

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Abstract

Career guidance is viewed as a policy instrument to support the achievement of a broad range of social policy goals for different segments of the population by most of the 33 countries taking part in this International Symposium. For young people, such goals include preparation for work and successful transitions to education, training, and employment. For adults, they concern upskilling and reskilling, employment and employability, and managing multiple work transitions. For employers, they concern addressing skills shortages and workforce adaptability. For education systems, they are seen as a way to improve their efficiency and effectiveness - the retention, performance, and progression of students. For vulnerable groups in society, they concern social mobility through education and workforce participation.

Despite these high expectations, in many countries, access to career development services is limited in the education sector and exists mainly for the unemployed in the employment sector. Employers, people living in rural areas and disadvantaged adults in general have the most difficulties in accessing services. Policy expectations for career development services, especially in the employment sector, are not matched by the quantity and quality of resources provided by government for such services and programmes. The public is rarely consulted in the development of policies for career development provision and in the design of services, despite the personal nature of such services. The use of customer feedback on career development provision is greatly underdeveloped in many countries, again despite the personal nature of such services, but some good examples of service and product codesigning are emerging. Ethical codes for career practitioners exist in countries with long-established career development systems but few provide advice to practitioners on how to deal with dilemmas arising from active labour market policies at the customers' level. The general status and standing of the codes themselves are questionable.

1. Introduction

This paper synthesises and summarises the perspectives articulated by the 33 countries attending the International Centre for Career Development Symposium in Tromsø in 2019.

The production of country papers and then thematic syntheses are at the core of the methodology used in the international symposia (Watts, Bezanson, and McCarthy, 2014). This synthesis and the other three thematic syntheses (covering the context and challenges for career development,

integrating career development into wider society, and leading innovative change for the future) will be made available prior to the 2019 symposium and will be used to underpin discussion during the four-day event and inform the development of country action plans and the 2019 communique.

Career development[1] services are always interconnected with the social norms and values that shape society, demographical trends, the health of the national economy including the labour market, and last but not least, political goals. Guidance is a tool for social mobility but also for workfare development. It is, however, the users and policy makers who make decisions on when, how and why to use guidance services.

In this thematic synthesis paper, we review the **aims, access, policy development, and ethical practices** theme discussed in the country papers submitted for the symposium.[2] The country papers cover five continents, representing totally different cultures, societies and levels of economic and social development. There is no one single 'best model' of career guidance service development. However, there are several previously published and available policy guides (ELGPN, 2015, OECD and EC, 2004) in the field. As Bassot (2012) noted, career guidance services are bridges, connecting individuals, communities, societies and economies. The nature and quality of these bridges differ in different social and cultural contexts and also according to the nature, size and shape of the labour markets.

The aims of career development services and access to these are also linked to the welfare vs. workfare regimes of countries. In some cases, labour market activation at an early stage of a citizen's lifespan is a primary goal, a work first approach rather than further investment in skills development. In other countries, a train first approach is more relevant as it means more long-term investment in citizens' skills. The balance between the two policies is an important and dynamic one (Brown, 1997). Career development services are part of the general human resource investment model in modern societies and economies. Within a *lifecycle investment framework* (Heckman, 2016), investment in human capacities at an early age of the lifespan provides a better pay off later while early engagement with the labour market may terminate the full development of the individual's working capacity.

2. Different perspectives on career development services

Citizens' view

The range of citizens' needs are manifold and include significant concerns about: how to make a living; what is the best course of preparation in education and training to make that living; how and whether to participate in or complete an education and/or training programme leading to the labour market; how to visualise and plan their futures in the immediate, short and long terms; how to manage being unemployed; how to stay longer in the workforce; how to balance their work and life and stay healthy; how to overcome personal, social and structural barriers to their participation in work and society; how to juggle different life and work roles simultaneously; how to manage increasingly precarious working conditions; whether and how to retrain when one's skills and/or job becomes obsolete; how

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[1] The terms 'career guidance', 'guidance', and 'career development' are used interchangeably throughout this paper to reflect the variance in terminology used across countries and continents.
[2] The full texts of all reports is available from https://www.kompetansenorge.no/iccdpp2019/key-outcomes/country-papers/.

to manage underemployment; how to stay employable; whether and how to emigrate for work; and how to stay safe and healthy at work.

Employers' view

Employers who, along with government (which is also a major employer), control the labour market, have different needs which include: education and training programmes and qualifications systems that are tailored to their needs; an employment and legal framework that suits their needs; an economic environment (including taxation policy) that supports their business maintenance and development; workers with the right knowledge, skills (including digital) and motivation, who are competent and adaptable and possess qualities such as independence, initiative taking, communication, team work, problem solving, responsibility etc.

Citizens and employers have different though complementary interests and needs, and governments' try to meet both sets of needs through different policy instruments of which the provision of career development services to citizens is a central one. Career development provision is in many senses the fulcrum, the point of balance and/or mediation between both sets of needs and interests but also supporting both sets of interests in continuous tension. Given such interests, how is career guidance referenced in policy terms, especially in the education and employment sectors? How does this play out in the provision of services and access to such services? What roles, if any, do the key stakeholders, the public and employers, play in the development of policy and services? How do career practitioners manage to balance the often-competing sets of interests?
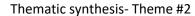
3. The aims of career development policy

The OECD (2004), in an international review of policies for career guidance, examined how career development is understood within the policy domain. It noted the belief of policy makers that career guidance contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of labour markets and of educational systems as well as to social equity[3]. The goals of career guidance are not just centred on the individual, families and community groups; they also concern public policy objectives which the OECD categorized into learning, labour market and social equity goals. Such goals change over time in different countries in response to current issues and developments.

Country responses on the aims of career guidance (International Symposium 2019) reflect public policy goals mentioned in the OECD (2004) review but additionally reflect those of a wider range of countries (OECD and non-OECD), and over double the number of countries (OECD 2003 - 14 countries; International Symposium 2019 - 33 countries). On this occasion, country responses on the aims of career guidance fall into two general categories: aims that view career guidance as a means to an end (policy instrument) in education, employment, and social inclusion policies; and aims that describe initiatives to improving the functioning of the career guidance system itself (functional). The majority

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[3] Public policy outcomes for career guidance are related to many key indicators for education, employment, and social equity policies. Key indicators of the efficiency of labour markets include employment rates, employment status and progression, unemployment rates and duration, labour force participation rates, labour force costs as well as labour productivity. Key indicators of educational efficiency include participation, retention, progression, performance, and transitions in education and training. Indicators of social equity include education and labour force participation of different population segments, income, access to education and training, at risk of poverty, long-term unemployment.

of responses viewed career guidance as a policy instrument that contributes significantly to education, training, and, especially, labour market outcomes. The results are presented in two tables below.

Table 1. Summary of aims for career guidance (policy instrument)

SKILLS: Addressing skills mismatches (MN, RS, LK, KH, EG, ENG[4]) Addressing skills shortages (KH, IE, EG, ENG, SCT, JP) Helping to improving the capacity and quality of the workforce, especially the low-skilled (CH, DE) Helping to improve the supply of skilled workers (CH) Supporting the development and adaptability of the skills of the national workforce to meet the needs and requirements of the labour market (AT, CA, CH, SY) Supporting the continuous upskilling and reskilling of the workforce (EE, HU, LU, NO, SG)
LABOUR MARKET: Addressing labour market and economic needs (HR) Improving rural productivity (IN) Supporting increased productivity at work (ENG) Supporting labour/workforce development (SG, LK) Improving the relationship between education/training programmes and the labour market (HR, QA, SY) Aiding a better balance between labour market demand and supply (NL, XK, TN) Supporting workforce adaptability (EG, FR, SCT, SG) for multiple work transitions (NO) in a volatile labour market Increasing the competitiveness of the workforce (EE) Supporting sustainable integration in the labour market (CH) of all citizens (FR) Supporting re-entry to the labour market of returners, unemployed and long-term unemployed (AT, CA, IN) Supporting an inclusive labour market – older workers, refugees, migrants, low-skilled, disabled (AT, NL) Improving labour market information (EG)
EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY Supporting sustained employment and employability (CH, LU) including for older adults to stay in the workforce longer (AT, NL, SG) Enhancing lifelong learning (AT, NL, QA, SG) and career adaptability (QA) Promoting citizen wellbeing in a lifelong learning society (KR) Preventing and reducing long-term unemployment (DE) and unemployment (EG, XK) Supporting female labour market participation (IN) Supporting early school leavers (CL) Supporting long-term unemployed to overcome barriers e.g. poverty, to enter the workforce (CA) Supporting transitions from informal to formal employment (IN) Supporting youth transitions from unemployment to employment (GH) Promote the rights of workers, job seekers, and retirees (USA)

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[4] Country two or three letter-codes are used to identify countries. A full list of country letter-codes used may be found in the apprendix to this report.

Increase the employment rate, especially of youth (GH, RS, SCT)
Assist in job placement activities (CL) and in matching unemployed with existing jobs (NL)
Supporting the hiring activities of employers including their search for workers (SG)
Informing employers and policymakers about qualifications (TN)
Assisting the unemployed (MN)
Assisting the migration of rural workers to urban centres (MN)
Supporting emigration and immigration for work (SG)
Improving labour market information (EG)

SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Promotion of innovation and self-employment (CL, IN)

PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD OF WORK
Changing people's attitudes to jobs e.g. encouraging people to seek work in the private sector than in the public sector (LK), and engagement with STEM careers (ENG)
Informing students of the realities of existing labour market opportunities (DE, EE, EG, JP)
Helping students to become competent career planners (FR, KH, JP, SG) and to make realistic and good labour market choices (MN, NO) including to make the right choice first time (DK)
Preparing students for a complex future labour market (NL, SG) through learning career management skills (AT, RS, SCT)
Supporting successful transitions from education to employment (CA, DE, FI, FR, XK, NL)
Supporting better allocations of students to education and training programmes (XK)
Promoting lifelong learning (NL)
Supporting youth and parents (TN)
Support emigration and immigration for work (SG) and international student mobility (FR)
Prepare people to work in a more culturally diverse workforce and society (JP)
Prepare people to work in a society where AI increasingly eliminates jobs (JP)
Change people's attitude to life/work balance, especially the value of being present at work for long hours in male dominated corporate culture (JP)
Prepare people to manage precarious working conditions with low pay, temporary jobs, and with increasing income disparity (JP)

SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
Assisting young people to make good choices of HE programmes (CA, CL)

PROMOTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET, TVET)
Supporting greater participation in VET (AT, DK, HU, IE, LK, XK, JP)

IMPROVING EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE
Preventing and reducing school dropout (DE, DK, EE, GH, KH, NL, NO) and early school leaving (HU)
Reducing higher education dropout (DE)
Support the efficiency of the education and training system (EG) – equality of attainment and achievement (SCT)
Promote the rights of all to education (USA)

SOCIAL INCLUSION
Supporting social mobility for young people in areas of disadvantage (ENG, FR)
Supporting active citizenship (FI, SG)
Supporting an inclusive society (SCT, SG) through educational and occupational integration (DE)
Supporting the social and economic integration of marginalized groups (EG, FI, HU) e.g. the poor, the vulnerable, disabled, immigrants, refugees, and rural people (GH, NO, QA, RS, SY)
Supporting the reduction of poverty (GH) and inequalities (FR)

Fight against discrimination and stereotypes (FR)

From Table 1 above, the following observations can be made:

1. The majority of the aims presented for career guidance were in support of labour market and employment policies, addressing the needs of employers and of the workforce. These aims were framed in terms of the skills needs of employers (skills shortages, upskilling and reskilling of the workforce, skills mismatches); labour market workforce development (adaptability, multiple transitions, productivity, staying longer in the workforce, inclusive labour market); employment and employability of the workforce (lifelong learning, maintaining employability, supporting employers and job placement, overcoming barriers to enter or re-enter the workforce, supporting youth employment, supporting migration, emigration and immigration for work). Two countries referenced the role of career guidance in supporting entrepreneurship.
2. The second largest category of responses concerned the role of career guidance in preparing people for the world of work. These were mainly concerned with educating young people about the realities of the labour market, preparing people to participate in a more complex and diverse working world that include precarious working conditions, the elimination of jobs through AI, more culturally diverse workforce, and a better work/life balance. They were also concerned with helping young people to visualise and plan pathways to the labour market through education and training, changing attitudes to certain jobs (including STEM) and to education and training for these jobs, supporting transitions to higher education and from education to employment, and educating for international student mobility and emigration.
3. The third largest category of responses concerned the role of career guidance in supporting social inclusion policies. The poor, the rural, the disabled, the immigrants and refugees, and those living in areas of disadvantage were specifically mentioned as vulnerable groups that could benefit from such support.
4. Improving educational efficiency (student retention, participation and performance) was viewed as a key aim of career guidance in one third of countries' responses.
5. The role of career guidance in improving participation rates in VET/TVET was mentioned by several countries.

In the country responses, career guidance, from a citizen perspective, is firmly rooted in labour market integration, navigation, and survival; in the successful undertaking of pathways to the labour market; and in overcoming barriers to labour market participation. For employers, career guidance functions to answer their skills needs and to provide them with a trained and competent workforce for the duration of their business lives.

The *functional* aims of career guidance reported by countries are represented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of aims for career development services (Functional)

Broadening access for immigrants and refugees (NO)
Developing digital access for citizens (NO)
Developing the professionalization of career practitioners (FI, XK)
Help service users to make good decisions and transitions (SI)Improving access to career guidance (FI, FR, IN)
Improving career learning in schools (NO, RS, XK), in higher education (DK, FI, FR, RS), in VET (FI, NL), and in youth centres (XK)
Improving labour market information collection and dissemination (IN), including on line provision (XK)
Improving quality of career guidance system (FI, NO)
Strengthening people's self-agency/personal agency to manage their work lives (FI, KR)

The functional aims concern improving the quality of career learning at all levels of education and training including through the training of career practitioners and the provision of labour market information; improving access to career learning (school, higher education, VET, youth centres, immigrant and refugees, online); and career learning content issues (development of self-agency).

4. Access to career development services

The delivery models of career development services have traditionally been based in second level schools in most countries, in the public employment services (PES) in other countries, or in a combination of both, all such approaches supported by some form of policy framework. In the case of developing countries, the first initiatives in the development of services are often undertaken by NGOs with the support of external donors, and in the absence of a policy framework. There are relatively few studies of public access to career guidance, the most notable of which is the special Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2014) focusing on skills and qualifications which surveyed 27,998 citizens across 28 EU countries. In that survey, 45% of respondents reported that they did not use career development services because they did not have access to them. However, 71% agreed that such services would be useful to help them to choose the right course of study.

Table 3 presents an overview of country responses to the question of access to services.

Table 3. Access to career guidance provision for different population groups.

POPULATION GROUP	FREE ACCESS	LEGAL ENTITLEMENT
School students	AT, CA, CH, CL, DE, DK, HR, IE, IN, ENG, EE, FI, FR, HU, KH, KR, LK, LU, MN, NL, NO, QA, RS, SCT, SG, SI, TN, USA, XK	DE, FI, FR, ENG, IE, KR, NO, RS
Higher Education students	AT, CA, CH, DE, DK, HR, IE, KR, EG, ENG, FI, FR, GH, HU, KH, LK, LU, MN, NO, RS, SCT, SG, SI, USA, XK	DE, FR, KR, RS
VET/TVET students	AT, DE, DK, EG, FI, FR, GH, HU, IE, KR, LU, MN, NL, NO, RS, SCT, SG, SI, XK	DE, FR, KR, RS
Unemployed (PES)	AT, CA, CL, DE, DK, HR, ENG, EE, FR, HU, IE, IN, KH, KR, NL, NO, QA, SI, SY, LU, MN, RS, SCT, SG, TN, USA, XK	DE, FR, KR, RS
Employed (PES)	AT, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, HU, KR, LK, LU, RS, SCT, SG, SI	DE, FR, KR, RS
Adult Guidance Service Users	DK, FR, HR, IE, FI, NO, USA	FR
Youth Centre users	EG, FI, FR, LU, JP, USA	FI, FR
NGO service users	GH,	
Special groups (NEETs, immigrants, refugees, low-skilled, minorities)	AT, CA, CH, CL, DK, FR, HR, JP, KR, LU, ENG, RS, SCT, USA, XK	
E-Guidance/Online services for all age or target groups	DE, DK, ENG, FR, IN, NO, SCT	
Employers	ENG, SG	

School, higher education students, VET/TVET students, and the unemployed appear as the most frequently mentioned categories of the population that are beneficiaries of career guidance provision. But the table does not tell the full story, for example, career guidance provision exists in only 5% of schools in India and a low percentage also exists for Cambodia. In Egypt, career guidance is provided in only 25% of VET/TVET schools.

In some countries, access to provision is a legal entitlement of all citizens (DE, FR, KR) or of a segment of the population (ENG, FI, IE). However, even when a legal entitlement exists, the reality of provision varies hugely. For example, in schools in Finland, the ratio of guidance counsellor to students is 1:300 which enables meaningful access to provision whereas in England and Ireland no such ratio exists which makes access more difficult and limited. Unrealistic career guidance staff to client ratios and insufficient time for career guidance were also mentioned as access barriers in a study of career guidance in the public employment services (PES) in 28 European countries (Sultana & Watts, 2006). A further issue is the professionalisation of actors (Table 2). In France, for example, the principal teachers who are responsible for career guidance in schools receive no training for that role! Even if

one had good access and good professionalism, career learning cannot be achieved without good labour market information about trends, opportunities and occupations, and the learning pathways to these (mentioned in Tables 1 and 2). One can safely say that Table 3 above describes theoretical access to career guidance. The reality of provision is quite different, as referenced in the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2014) survey.

There was wide variety in country responses concerning which segments of the population were excluded from access or who had the most difficulties in obtaining access as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Segments of the population excluded from or experiencing difficulties accessing career guidance

Indigenous	CL
Older adults	CL
HE graduates and professionals	CL, HU, SY
Rural	AT, CA, IN, LK, USA
Incarcerated	USA
Disadvantaged, poor in some districts	CA, LK, USA
Unemployed (long-term or unregistered)	AT, EG, SY
Private sector employees	DE, EG, SY
Pensioners	HU, SI
Tribal	IN
Ethnic groups	JP
Religious minorities	JP
Women (on career break)	IN, (QA), LK
By language	CA
Self-employed	NL
Persons with temporary employment contracts	NL
Older adults	DE, EG, NL, QA
Migrants and refugees, including undocumented	AT, NL, USA
Low skilled	AT, EG, NL
Disabled	NL
Employers	TN
Parents	TN
Young adults in career transition	EG, QA
Adults in SMEs	DE, EG, QA
VET/TVET students	QA
Early school leavers	EG, LK
School students	EG

People living in rural areas and adults of all age groups, especially with educational and other disadvantages, appeared to have greater access difficulties. Table 4 above provides a useful checklist for countries considering how to have more inclusive policies and systems for career guidance.

5. Public consultation on the policy and practice of guidance

In the past 25 years there has been a shift by public bodies to involving stakeholders in policy and systems development. This shift is based on the belief that the public and other stakeholders who will be impacted by a public policy can help to contextualise the policy, to highlight the multiplicity and complexity of factors that affect the successful implementation of the policy, and to identify the agreements and conflicts of different stakeholder groups (Helbig Dawes, Dzhusupova, Klievink, and Mkude, 2015). Engagement with stakeholders is more likely produce more and better policy options and implementation actions as well as increased ownership (public trust and endorsement) of the policy and implementation actions by the relevant stakeholders. Good practice in public consultation on policies and services for career guidance requires a clear purpose of engagement, resources for engaging with the public, an appropriate methodology (mix of methods) of engagement, a plan on how and when to incorporate stakeholder input, information for stakeholders on how their input will be used or not, and feedback on its use (Helbig et al., 2015).

The use of customer satisfaction surveys for services and products, based in marketing research, has a longer history than public policy consultation. These have been evaluation tools by nature with a view to improving services and products and have latterly been used by public services to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Their usage across private and public sectors has been enhanced and increased by the arrival of the internet. There are many reasons why customer feedback is important: improving product and service design and making them more relevant to customers; improving customer experience; building customer loyalty by making them feel that their opinions are valued; increasing word of mouth advertising and personal recommendations; and making business decisions about the products and services one provides.

How have public policy consultation and customer feedback been used to develop relevant policies and practices for career guidance in the countries participating in this Symposium? To what extent are the opinions of the public and service users collected and used in the development of policies and practice for career guidance? How are stakeholders involved, if at all? The following table provides some of the answers:

Table 5. Public consultations on career development policies and systems.

CONSULTATION METHOD	POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION	DELIVERY ORGANISATION/SERVICE LEVEL
Online	FR, IN, JP, NL, RS, SCT, XK	CA, FI
Public hearings/panels	NL, SG	
Customer/client feedback surveys (including of employers); complaints box		AT, CA, CH, DE, DK, FI, FR, HR, IE, ENG, JP, NL, NO, SCT, (DE), SY
Researched case studies		ENG
National Councils, Advisory Bodies, Monitoring Committees or Fora for guidance	EE, FR, IE, NO	
Student feedback		CA, EE, EG, FI, HU, NL, QA, SCT, SY
Youth voice census		ENG
The Recommendation Index		EE
Graduate destination data		ENG, FI
Stakeholder meetings, including NGOs	AT, FR	GH, MN, QA, SCT, SG, SY, XK
Inspectorate		IE, NL
National survey		CH, IE
Policy and system reviews	FI, GH, IE	
Advisory bodies	FR	
Monitoring committees	FR	
Equality impact assessment	SCT	
Academic (PhD) research		SCT
Co-designing and concept testing with user groups		SCT
School self-evaluation		JP, NO

Table 5 presents a very mixed picture:

1. Less than half of countries used mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in policy development and coordination. These mainly took the form of online input and of stakeholder meetings. In only few of those countries have they been used for improving policies for career guidance.
2. In over 66% of countries, some form of customer feedback was sought on the delivery of career guidance services but not for all career guidance service sectors and institutions. The remaining countries have not yet started to collect such data.
3. In all, twenty-one different methods of consultation and data collection were identified. Some countries e.g. Scotland, use a broad mix of data collection and consultation methods.

Some caveats to the content presented in Table 5 should be highlighted. In Korea, the government recommends that career guidance delivery organisations/institutions should consult with potential users but there is no evidence that this has ever taken place. In India, online policy consultation exists but there is no evidence on what citizen input has been collected and how it has been used. In Canada, there is online consultation to develop labour market information products, but the public has not been made aware of this possibility.

Other countries provide stronger examples of practice. In Germany and Japan, user evaluations of public career services are collected and published annually. In Germany, feedback is sought from employers. Sometimes the evaluations are part of general institutional (e.g. school) evaluations (EG, IE, JP). In Germany and Scotland, products and services are developed through co-designing with potential user groups, and in Germany, persons with good suggestions are rewarded. In Finland, student feedback has motivated the development of better and more integrated services. However, as several countries (e.g. AT, IE) concluded, there is no consistent strategy, within and across sectors, to collect user opinions in order to improve policies and services for career guidance.

While the shift to policy consultation with stakeholders is relatively new and varies in effect across political cultures, it is quite surprising how under-developed customer feedback approaches are for a service such as career guidance which presents itself as client-centred and with a wide range of stakeholders including employers. The lack of attention to this feature of service provision evaluation may have contributed over the years to the underdevelopment of access to the service and to the mixed reputation of the service in many countries where it has been established over a longer time period.

6. Ethical practice in career guidance work

One of the tensions in the work of career guidance practitioners is how to balance the sometimes-competing needs of the individual, the labour market, and of government employment policy, where it exists. This occurs in its more acute forms in countries with government-funded organisations such as public employment services (PES), when unemployed persons have labour market aspirations for occupations where there is no demand, and especially where career guidance is provided as part of active labour market policies with the emphasis and priority on forcing an unemployed individual to take whatever occupation is in demand or available. In some countries, public employment service staff are given targets of getting unemployed people into work and off unemployment benefit and the focus is on fulfilling these targets rather than assisting people to develop a life/work project.

These tensions also exist where public employment services coerce or influence unemployed people to undertake VET/TVET programmes in which they have no interest and/or aptitude, where the priorities are course participation targets, meeting the needs of course providers, and getting people off the unemployment register, rather than any consideration of the individual concerned. In less acute forms, this balancing act occurs where career guidance practitioners employed by an education or training provider undertake a recruitment role, trying to influence potential students/trainees to participate in a training programme in which they have no interest/aptitude, with the sole intention of meeting the recruitment needs and targets of the training provider.
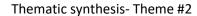
Organisations e.g. government-funded education and training institutions and public employment services, have missions, roles and values. Sometimes their intent is not impartial, and this may not be obvious or transparent to the service user. Many career practitioners are employed by such state-funded organisations and sometimes experience moral dilemmas between their professional beliefs and values and those of their employer or the employers' work programme or the organisation's funder's policy. A similar but different set of dilemmas are faced by career practitioners working in countries where the demand for employment and training opportunities far exceeds the actual supply of such opportunities and where emigration for work is a key release valve for pressure on local labour markets. In a 'slack 'or loose labour market, where job seekers vastly outnumber the job opportunities available, as often is the case in developing economies, the unemployed and employees have very little choice in shaping their occupational futures and in making career moves. Many are willing to accept training or job opportunities that might not match their interests, abilities, and educational level simply because there is no other way for them to make a livelihood or to get a foothold in the workforce. This can lead to significant underemployment.

Dilemmas can also arise for career practitioners where government policy is to attract more school-leavers to participate in programmes such as VET, especially where there is high labour market demand and insufficient supply. Several countries mentioned (Table 1 above) that one key aim of career guidance is to promote participation in VET programmes to potential learners. In this scenario, is the promotion of government policy and labour market demand by career practitioners ethical or realistic? What are the boundaries between acting as a recruitment agent and as a career practitioner? Is it ethical to ignore both government policy and labour market realities, and not to inform school leavers of such opportunities?

To help career practitioners cope with dilemmas of conflicting interests of clients, organizations, employment policy, and employment and training opportunities, codes of ethics for career practitioners have been developed. Most of these enshrine the principles of autonomy (freedom of thinking and action), promoting beneficence (the welfare of the client), and avoiding maleficence (causing harm). The following table summarises country responses on the existence of codes of ethics:

Table 6. Codes of ethics for career practitioners.

Code of ethics for career practitioners	Established by a professional association	Provided by a statutory body or organisation	Other origin	Makes reference to dilemmas caused by policy demands and labour market signals
CA, DE, DK, ENG, FR, SCT, EE, FI, HR, HU, IE, JP, KR, NO, SG, USA	CA, DE, DK, ENG, FR, SCT, EE, FI, HU, IE, JP, KR, NO, SG, USA	DE, FR, HR, NO, SCT	CH, HR, NL	DE, DK, ENG, NO, SCT

Just over half of countries have codes of ethics for career practitioners or codes that that include career practitioners. Most of these have been developed by professional associations. Few of them make specific reference to career counselling ethical dilemmas, and there is no strict monitoring of implementation. Such codes have been developed mainly in countries where career guidance programmes and services have existed for many years. However, as the USA response points out, affiliation to professional associations is not mandatory. Such codes are often not recognised by policymakers and may not have legal standing.

While ethical dilemmas can and do arise, career practitioners have an important role in informing their clients of labour market realities, both demand and supply. It is important to note that labour force demand and supply signals are sometimes passed on by state organisations, employer bodies, and sector associations to career services and to practitioner associations to bring to the attention of their clients (e.g. IE, SG) and can be included formally or informally in career interventions (e.g. Skills Planning Model, SCT).

7. Conclusions

When one looks at the policy aims (Table 1) and access (Tables 3 and 4), there seems to be a significant mismatch between the policy expectations of career guidance and the means to their achievement. Given that one's workforce life is expected to be at least 40 years and longer, and to consist of multiple transitions including opportunity and time for reskilling, and of periods of unemployment, the need for support services such as career guidance for adult workers and for employers increases exponentially. The development of E-guidance centres for all age guidance provision (Table 3) is a step in this direction. More attention needs to be paid to the quality and quantity of career learning activities to prepare the workforce of the future. Providing career guidance support to employers, especially those who own SMEs and the self-employed, hardly figures at all in country responses and is in stark contrast with the expectations of the aims of career guidance (Table 1). This is a real blind spot. If career guidance provision cannot make itself relevant to address employers' needs and those of the labour market in general, it loses its status as a potential and significant contributor to workforce maintenance and development.

Career development programmes and services are mainly deployed by policymakers to support the socio-economic needs of different countries through education and employment policies and systems, and through social inclusion policies. These goals are usually, but not always, set down in written strategies by governments. The aims of career guidance services can be rooted in these master strategies (e.g. national economic and social development, education and labour market efficiency, human resource development, social inclusion, sustainable development etc.). What we are observing when reading different country responses are socio-political processes manifested in career guidance service design and delivery. In many countries, policies and services are being developed without public input; resources provided are inadequate; the gaps between expectations from and access to services are huge. On the other hand, public and other stakeholder recognition of the value of such services is high. New ways have to be found and old and new ways used to transform public recognition into relevant and adequate policies, services, and practices.

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Appendix: Country name abbreviation codes

AT: AUSTRIA	ENG: ENGLAND	JP: JAPAN	QA: QATAR
CA: CANADA	FI: FINLAND	KH: CAMBODIA	RS: SERBIA
CH: SWITZERLAND	FR: FRANCE	KR: KOREA	SCT: SCOTLAND
CL: CHILE	GH: GHANA	LK: SRI LANKA	SG: SINGAPORE
DE: GERMANY	HR: CROATIA	LU: LUXEMBOURG	SI: SLOVENIA
DK: DENMARK	HU: HUNGARY	MN: MONGOLIA	SY: SYRIA
EE: ESTONIA	IE: IRELAND	NL: NETHERLANDS	TN: TUNISIA
EG: EGYPT	IN: INDIA	NO: NORWAY	USA: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA XK: KOSOVO