INTEGRATED POLICIES:
CREATING SYSTEMS THAT WORK

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1. Integrated Policies for Career Development

In most countries preparing and developing the workforce is the shared responsibility of several government ministries including those concerned with: education; higher education; vocational training; youth; employment; and social affairs.

A key part of this preparation is teaching citizens to understand and have the capacity to respond to:

- local, regional, national, and international labour market opportunities;
- the education and training programs available to them;
- the process of finding and securing work;
- opportunities for enterprise and entrepreneurship; and
- Their own strengths and capacities and how these might be used in the social and economic circumstances that they find themselves.

A key question in assessing policies in this area is then how well do different ministries, parts of government and other agencies cooperate with each other to develop individuals' capacities to manage their own careers. An assumption that underpins this synthesis

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is that high levels of intra-governmental co-operation lead to the development of integrated policies which are effective in the development of the workforce and the realisation of individuals' potential.

Career development is lifelong and cross-sectorial policy area. As a consequence examples of career development activities can be found across the range of public services (in schools, in vocational training centres, in adult learning centres, in universities, in prisons, and in public employment services) as well as in the private sector both as a market activity and embedded in the activities of the human resources departments of businesses, professional associations and trade unions.

This typically means that multiple government ministries/departments have an interest in the area. These will usually include ministries responsible for education, employment and others including those associated with social welfare, criminal justice and health. An additional layer of complexity is offered within countries which have strong devolution and where local, regional or sub-national governments have a responsibility or an interest in aspects of workforce preparation and career development.

This theme is concerned with how ministries and other key stakeholders in countries manage a shared responsibility for the career learning of citizens and forge it into a coherent national strategy and delivery system. Underpinning the theme are concerns about the frequent duplication of efforts that emerge in career learning and development systems that are not integrated or co-ordinated. Also underpinning the theme is a belief that as individuals experience their careers over a lifetime they should be able to access support for their careers over the same period.

In order to ensure this the OECD has argued that countries need to build policy frameworks for lifelong guidance which are capable of integrating a range of interventions associated with different life stages and sectors into a coherent lifelong system. Cedefop has also published guiding principles for the development of lifelong guidance systems.

2. Key Findings

The country papers describe a wide range of contexts and approaches to policy. In a few countries there is evidence that a strategic approach is being taken to career development policy. Such countries are typified by the development of national strategies, unified service delivery approaches and the involvement of a range of citizen and stakeholder bodies in managing policy implementation. In addition, some countries draw heavily on international links to support effective policy learning and borrowing.

However, despite much positive practice, the country papers more frequently painted a fragmented and challenging landscape for the development and implementation of career learning and development policy. Many of the papers discussed wider education, employment and skills policy within their countries.

However, typically these policies provided a context for career development rather than being explicitly linked to it. In such cases career development is typically peripheral to mainstream policy priorities often as a result of the inability to locate it clearly within the jurisdiction of a single ministry.

3. Effective Practice

This section highlights key examples of policies that seemed to be working effectively.

**Development of National
Strategies and Frameworks**

An important component in the creation of effective career learning and development systems is the existence of a national strategy around which policy activities can be co-ordinated.

Examples of the implementation of national strategies can be found in a number of countries including the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Austria (supported by three ministries), Skilled and Safe Workplaces in New Zealand (seven ministries), the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act in the USA, (the Dept. of Labour), the National Labour Market Transition Initiative in KSA (the Ministry of Labour), the National Development Plan in Qatar (three ministries), the National Skills Development Policy in India (Ministry of Labour and Employment) and the National Strategy for the Development of Human Resources in Tunisia (involving the three key ministries of education, higher education, and vocational training and employment).

Where such strategies are effective their implementation is closely monitored through policy impact reporting. For example in Austria the strategy includes annual reporting using a number of indicators and benchmarks.

An important element in the development of a national strategy is the extent to which the policy responsibility is shared with and owned by the different stakeholders. In most countries at least three ministries are involved. Typically they are education (including VET), higher education, and labour.

Employers and worker representatives are also present as stakeholders. Only in New Zealand is it mandatory to consult civil society in the development of policies that affect them although some form of consultation is frequently a feature of policy development in many countries worldwide. Developing the career management skills (CMS) of citizens is a shared policy responsibility of several ministries and can act as a lever for and component of integrated policies for youth employment.

National/Regional Coordination

Another feature of effective implementation of career learning and development systems is the existence of policy coordination structures or mechanisms at

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national, regional/state, and local government levels. At a minimum level this can take the form of the lead ministry on national strategy consulting with other relevant ministries and stakeholders. At a more sophisticated level one co-ordination approach that has been adopted in a number of countries has been the establishment of a national forum or steering group (see Cedefop) which act as a platforms for consultation, exchange and collaboration.

The National Lifelong Guidance Coordination and Cooperation Group in Finland aims to enhance national, regional and local information, advice and guidance services by supporting a lifelong perspective, aiding the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative and strengthening multi-administrative and multi-professional co-operation among the service providers and policy makers. The Group also acts as a steering group for the national development programs in guidance including those that are funded through the European Social Funds.

The Career Guidance Forum in Estonia fulfills a similar remit. Regional consultation groups linked to the national forum exist in both countries.
The issue of policy coordination was raised at the third international symposium on career development and it is clear from the country papers that this remains as an issue. Some countries discussed the challenges of trying to develop integrated lifelong guidance policies when policy in the country was formed at a range of different levels (local, regional and national/federal) as well as across different departments.

Canada provides a good example of this where some learning and work initiatives are developed at the federal level, but the provinces and territories have ultimate policy responsibility for education and training and in turn devolve such responsibility to local actors such as school boards. Thus there is at present huge variation in career learning policy and practice both between and within the provinces.

On the other hand labor market responsibility is shared between federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Like many other countries Canada has sought to decentralise policy making. As a result the challenges around local/national coordination have increased.

However Canada does facilitate policy initiatives in education and labour across the provinces through the work of a number of federal structures such as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), and in particular the Forum of Labor Market Ministers (FLMM). Recently the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), a subset of CMEC, has set career education as a key strategic priority and made significant progress in commissioning research and developing a formal strategy to support provincial action in K-12 (school) education in the Atlantic bounded provinces. Similar tensions between decentralisation and national strategy can also be found in a range of other countries including the USA and the United Kingdom.

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Integrated Service Delivery Infrastructures

Many of the challenges relating to career learning and development policy relate to concerns about the fragmentation of service delivery. The tendency for career learning to be delivered in ways that are either embedded into larger institutions (such as schools or universities), or focused on a particular life stage or situation or target group (such as provision for unemployed workers), presents difficulties for policies which are seeking to achieve a lifelong and integrated service approach.

A number of countries (e.g. Finland and Estonia) have tried to address this through the creation of integrated service delivery structures. In others such as New Zealand, Scotland and Wales a national all-age careers service or skills organisation has been a feature of policy for a number of years. Such structures are typically highly visible to citizens, open to a range of different client groups and able to provide a varied range of career learning and development services.

International Structures

In an increasingly globalised world there is a need to create integrative structures that can support policy learning and sharing at the international level. This was highlighted in the communique from the sixth international symposium.

International policy learning and sharing to date has been facilitated by:

- the International Symposia for Career Development and Public Policy since 1999 ;
- the international reviews of policies for career guidance undertaken by the OECD, by CEDEFOP and ETF, agencies of the European Commission, and the World Bank working in cooperation and collaboration, and the tools such as Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers arising from those reviews;
- the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy established in 2004;
- the international training in career development and public policy provided jointly to policymakers by the ILO and ETF since 2013; and
- the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) since 2007.

The European Union is the only world region where substantial and sustained attempts at international policy coordination and cooperation for career learning and development have been made with significant backing from national policy makers. The European Council of Ministers has set down specific directions for the reform of career services in Member States; it has also included reference to lifelong guidance in policy positions adopted in education (at all forms and levels) and in employment. The ELGPN has been provided with European programme funding to assist reform efforts through policy sharing and learning, and the development of EU common reference tools.

One of the unique features of ELGPN has been the composition of the country teams involving representatives from education and labour ministries. Many Member States report that ELGPN has acted as a catalyst for national dialogue, exchange and collaboration. However, there are considerable challenges in establishing international structures.

Typically such structures have little formal power and their effectiveness is based on their ability to establish a functional community of practice which can provide a space for the lending and borrowing of policies and the collective development of new policies. It is also important to recognise the difference between

ELGPN, which operates at the policy level and has funding and a level of legitimacy with policy makers and other forms of international co-operation which typically organise practitioners. Such structures (e.g. the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance or the Asia Pacific Career Development Asssociation) are highly valuable but typically have no funding and limited engagement and influence at the policy level.

4. Challenges for Integrated Career Development Policies

The country papers revealed a range of challenges that countries were experiencing in implementing career learning and development policies. Many of the challenges they discussed were broader ones relating to wider education or labour market issues. However, this synthesis focuses on the issues that relate specifically to the integration of career development policy.

No tradition of Career Development

Some of the countries attending the symposium have very limited traditions of career development practice and policy. For these countries (typically outside of the English speaking world or Western Europe) there are major challenges in establishing career development as a viable policy area.

Most commonly engagement with career development is described as beginning in an ad hoc way usually focused around an initiative associated with a particular client group (such as young unemployed people). From this kind of fragmented beginning it then becomes necessary to theorise career development more clearly and to consider how it might be connected to wider policy agendas. In some cases (such as India) the development of career development policies is taking place alongside the development of a wider range of other education and skills policies.

In others it is taking place alongside even broader political transitions such as Tunisia's transition to democracy. This means that the development of careers policy is taking place within a highly fluid context. Such a context poses both opportunities to position career development centrally, but also challenges in trying to integrate career development into embryonic systems.

In other contexts the lack of a strong history of career development offers countries the opportunity to undertake strategic planning before beginning

implementation of a career development system. The plans outlined in the country paper from Saudi Arabia offer a good example of this kind of strategic approach. Understanding of the role of career learning in workforce development.

In many countries, even those with long histories of career services, the role of career guidance in workforce development is not generally understood and appreciated. This contributes to a lack of awareness that career learning is a responsibility shared by several ministries in a lifelong continuum starting with school and extending throughout life (Tunisia, New Zealand, Qatar and Nigeria all mentioned this as an issue). Thus the need for linked policies and for linked or integrated delivery systems across ministries is not immediately obvious to those concerned.

Challenges of partnership and governance
Several countries (e.g. Tunisia, Nigeria) drew attention to the lack of tradition of ministries working in partnership and cooperation with each other, and of the limited communication across ministries (e.g. Tunisia, KSA, Nigeria). KSA referred to the challenge of managing a large number of competing ministries and agencies and the time that it takes to get meaningful agreement on career learning policy issues. Even in countries with a longer tradition of career guidance, there are challenges to better integrate government initiatives (Denmark) and to build and organise coherency in career guidance delivery.

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There are specific challenges for countries which have strong federal and regional government structures. In many such cases federal funds are given for career learning and development; in others responsibility lies largely at the local level. However there is great variability in how such funds are managed and distributed and in achieving any level of national consistency. The challenge of national consistency is highlighted by the USA, but also in other countries

such as Finland, England and New Zealand where some or all of the responsibility for the delivery of career services to citizens is devolved to local authorities/municipalities or even to education and employment institutions themselves.

The involvement of social partners (employers, worker representative organisations) and of civil society in integrated policy and systems development for career learning appeared underdeveloped in many countries. Corruption was also noted as a challenge to the integration of policies.

National and Cultural Challenges

Some countries highlighted national and cultural challenges that mitigated against the successful implementation of career development policies.

Countries in the Middle East (e.g. Saudi Arabia) described how efforts to implement career development are related to broader economic and cultural transformations. This included the need to develop citizens' engagement with a wider range of careers (including those outside of the public sector) and to develop vocational education as part of enacting a skills transformation. In some cases the concept of "career" itself needs to be introduced as part of introducing career development.

In countries such as Nigeria there are political and cultural divisions between different religious and ethnic groups that impact on relationships with the state and the way that services are delivered. In New Zealand this kind of diversity has been addressed through the development of a number of culturally specific career development initiatives.

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Some large countries described the challenges of having a range of diverse labour markets and education systems and highlight the substantial challenges that exist in delivering any public services in countries that are large and sparsely populated. Conversely some smaller countries (such as Macao) noted the challenges of developing career guidance and in states with labour markets with limited diversity and where roles that would be distinct in larger states are often combined.

Lack of Priority by Policy Makers

A number of countries highlighted the difficulty of gaining the attention of policy makers and positioning career development centrally, and of continuity and sustainability subsequent to the attention having been gained. The fourth international symposium addressed the issue of the leadership of career development policy within countries. Within many European countries the development of the ELGPN has indicated and supported the growth of policy makers' engagement in career development. In other countries

policy interest in the field has been more variable with some bemoaning a declining level of engagement from policy makers.

A key focus in Europe has been to identify areas in which guidance can support wider policy aims and to work to get it explicitly addressed in European resolutions and strategies. The development of two European Council Resolutions (2004, 2008) and the current project by ELGPN to develop European Guidelines for Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems are good examples of this kind of high level policy work. Countries are then able to link to these European policies and to use them to raise the profile of guidance. Examples of this are given by Estonia and Finland where the development of the European Youth Guarantee has created a context within which career development is strongly valued .

The value of explicitly linking career development to broader policy initiatives was also important nationally. This issue was highlighted at the sixth international symposium and it was clear from the country papers that many countries were continuing to link career development to wider policies. For example in Denmark career development has been strongly linked to government initiatives around vocational education and training. In Qatar career development has been linked to the Qatarization policy agenda.
Resourcing and professionalisation

Linked to concerns about a lack of priority with policy makers, a number of country papers raised concerns

about the overall level of resourcing available for career development (e.g. the UK [with the situation being most acute in England] and Indonesia). However this was not the case in all countries. In some such as Korea the level of funding for career development has been increased. However many country papers highlight the challenges in establishing overall levels of resourcing for career development due to the fragmented nature of the field.

Where resources were available, some countries raised concerns that they remained fragmented and were usually linked to particular programmes rather than to the development of a lifelong career development system. For example in Nigeria an increase in funding for career development has been targeted at unemployed workers and is not available to the wider population.

There were also some attempts to co-ordinate and unify resources more effectively to increase efficiency. For example in Estonia some strategic restructuring of the sector has been undertaken to unify service delivery and integrate funding sources.

A related concern in many countries was the professional resources that were available for the delivery of career development. In many countries the career development field is weakly professionalised with practitioners being drawn from a wide range of professional and educational backgrounds. Some countries (e.g. Austria, Taiwan, Canada and

the UK) highlighted the importance of further professionalisation of the career development workforce while others (e.g. Taiwan) noted the very limited availability of professionals in the field.

Evidence and Evaluation

A number of countries raised concerns about the evidence base and the failure to evaluate policies and programmes. This was a theme that was highlighted during the fourth, fifth and sixth international symposiums and continues to be a major challenge for the field.

There is some evidence that countries have made some progress in developing the evidence base for careers work with promising initiatives from Canada and the ELGPN. The ELGPN has set out the "lifelong guidance policy cycle" and suggested that effective policy making requires a cycle of development, implementation, monitoring and evaluating and learning from this process. However, despite some progress in the evidence base the country papers suggest that the ideal of evidence-based policy is rarely being realised and that there is a need to embed the idea of evidence-based practice.

In some countries the lack of evidence and evaluation can be accounted for by the fact that there is either no domestic research base in this field or the research base is very small. However, even in countries where there is a stronger tradition of career development research this does not always influence the development of policy. For example, in Canada, concern about the disconnection between policy, practice and research has led to the establishment of the Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development.

An important recent development in the United States has been the inclusion of a common set of evaluation rubrics within the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act 2014. This is important as it provides a rare example of public policy leading evaluation practice in the career development field.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The aspiration to develop strategic and co-ordinated career learning and development systems to support youth work transitions was articulated in almost all of the country papers. However, the transversal nature of career learning and development makes this challenging as it requires the policy partnership of several ministries and other stakeholders to make this a reality.

The country papers also make it clear that given the diversity of administrative responsibility and of the history of career learning and development in any country, a one size fits all approach is unlikely to be useful.

However, it is possible to identify a range of questions that it would be worth all countries considering.

QUESTION 1:

How well are the roles and shared nature of policy responsibility for workforce preparation, including career learning and development understood and acted upon in your country? The Youth Guarantee Program, now active across the European Union, is one promising example of collaborative provision. Might something like this be tried in your country? What other concrete ideas might support all key policy players working together?

QUESTION 2:

The New Zealand country paper explicitly indicated that civil society (i.e. communities, extended family) as well as players across jurisdictions are consulted on how career services should be organised? To what extent is civil society influencing service provision in your country?

QUESTION 3:

How are career development services for young people in your country integrated together? How could this be improved e.g. single service delivery structure; a better coordinated delivery structure; a national framework; a national co-ordinating body? Countries with single service delivery structures suggest these structures make career services more visible and therefore more accessible to the public. What options are most achievable in your country to improve both integration and accessibility of services?

Foot Notes

1. OECD (2004). Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap. Paris: OECD.
2. Cedefop (2005). Improving Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
3. See http://www.lifelongguidance.at
4. See http://www.mbie.govt.nz/what-we-do/business-growth-agenda/skilled-safe-workplaces
5. Cedefop (2008). Establishing and Developing National Lifelong Guidance Policy Forums. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
6. ICCDPP Communique: Third International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. Shaping the Future: Connecting Career Development and Workforce Development (Australia). 21 –24 April 2006.
7. ICCDPP (2011). Communique: Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (Hungary). 5 –7 December2011.
8. Watts, A.G., Bezanson, L. & McCarthy, J. (2014). The international symposia on career development and public policy: retrospect and prospect. Australian Journal of Career Development, 23(3), 108-118.
9. Watts, A.G. (2014). Cross-national reviews of career guidance systems: overview and reflections. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 32, 4-14.
10. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers. Paris: OECD.
11. Sultana, R. (2009). Career Guidance Policies: Global Dynamics, Local Resonances. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies.
12. This issue has been discussed in more detail in Sultana, R.G. (2006) Challenges for Career Guidance in Small States. Malta: EMCER.
13. ICCDPP (2007). Communique: Fourth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. Shaping the Future: Connecting Career Development and Workforce Development (Scotland). 22 –25 April 2007.
14. A range of career development focused responses by European countries to the Youth Guarantee are mapped in Borbély-Pecze, T.B. and Hutchinson, J. (2013). The Youth Guarantee and Lifelong Guidance (ELGPN Concept Note No. 4). Jyväskylä: The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).
15. ICCDPP (2011). Communique: Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (Hungary). 5 –7 December2011.
16. ICCDPP (2009). Communique: Fifth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (New Zealand). 14 –17 November 2009.
17. Hooley, T. (2014). The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.
18. See http://ccdf.ca/crwg/.

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