Synthesis – Theme 4: Leading innovative change for the future.

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

This paper summarises how countries participating in the ICCDPP symposium are innovating and addressing change in career development practice and policy. Some innovations are concerned with the development and implementation of guidance policies while others focus on new ways to design and organise the career development services and innovations.

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, aims for and access to career development services and integrating career development into wider society) 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.

This paper synthesises how participating countries have addressed recent innovative changes in career development public policies (theme four). It explores the future of career development and asks how the field can be more innovative.

Previous symposia have focused the role that careers services can play as an integral part of wider policies and programmes relating to education, training, employment and social inclusion. This includes such issues as co-ordination and co-operation, quality and evidence, transforming technology and social return on investment. The 2017 Symposium in Seoul discussed changes in the labour market and how career development can help societies to respond and shape such changes.

The issue of innovation in career development services has been addressed implicitly in previous symposia and the recommendations in the communiques have invited participating countries to transform their career development systems and policies through a range of innovations. The 2015 Symposium in Des Moines highlighted how the use of technology in career development systems and services has the potential to enhance the services, but only if they are coordinated, cohesive and streamlined. The use of technologies is only one aspect of change that career development policies need to be alert to. The 2017 Symposium discussed the relevance of career professional training and development in the light of labour market changes. The recommendations also emphasised the innovations in building career development skills. Establishing an evidence base for sustainable

practice and policy development and building representative structures for integrated cross-sectoral career development policies have been overarching themes in seeking for innovative change.

This year, the call for country papers explicitly asked the delegates to reflect on innovative change from different perspectives. Countries were asked to describe new ideas, methods, products or programmes that have been developed as a response to emerging demand for career services. The countries were also asked to reflect on the questions from a wider perspective: what approaches, practices or strategies have been applied in their national, territorial or regional contexts?

The 33 participating countries have different traditions of career development. One county's well-established intervention might be a long-term strategic goal or an indicator of innovative change for another country. This synthesis paper examines how participating countries have encouraged, supported and developed innovations and allowed career guidance provision to change in response to the new ways that people are accessing information and services and co-constructing career related knowledge in new communal way. This synthesis looks also at the leadership that needs to exist within the career development field to support the innovations and developments to ensure that career guidance provision is up to date and ready for the future.

The following four questions were used to explore how innovative change in career development services could address the challenges in the changing context:

- What are the key innovations or ways that career development programmes and services have changed over the last 10 years? This could include changes relating to technology, practice, management and governance and the use of new theories and evidence.
- How do national policies and initiatives, where they exist, ensure and support the development of innovation in career development services provision?
- What new, innovative and promising interventions in career development programmes and services is your country planning for the future? How are such innovations making the most of open data initiatives, online technologies, artificial intelligence and other forms of innovation?
- How is the training and continuing professional development (CPD) of careers professionals encouraging innovation and taking account of changes in technology and the labour market?

2. Innovative change

During the last two decades, all the symposia have been based on the assumption that guidance provision as a whole is transforming. Most of the symposium communiques urge countries to adopt strategic leadership and co-operation across different policy sectors. In addition, the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) noted that effective policies for lifelong guidance need to involve different authorities and stakeholders. No service provider or organisation can meet the needs of diverse client groups alone (ELGPN, 2015). Transformation of career development practices and policies is not an instant, dramatic change. It is rather a process with many actors, various interests, and multiple layers. The transformation can occur in emphasis and paradigm, politics and policy, as well as in career development practice (Nykänen, Saukkonen & Vuorinen, 2012). This analysis examines the ideas of 'innovation' and 'transformation' from all of these perspectives.

The country papers revealed themes that illustrate varying levels of innovation in career development systems and policies. The themes are connected to career development policies, structures, new

delivery modes in career centers, the use of technology, establishing the evidence base and the implementation of the innovations. The different levels in innovation can be described as a continuum (see Figure 1) that consists of: initiating career development; contributing to sectoral development; promoting collective action; and investing in systemic change. This continuum with key themes is described in more detail as follows.

Figure 1. Different levels of innovative change in practice and policy development

Innovative change in career development policies

A number of countries report that a lack of national career development policy is due to the short history of the careers field in their country, lack of support from government or social partners, the complexity of governance structures, lack or frequent change of leadership, large or complex geographies or political instability.

When countries are initiating the career development policies, early innovative changes typically relate to the support mechanisms for individuals in getting access to relevant information, making career choices, upskilling and in transition learning. Next, innovative change is connected to sectoral development, e.g., focusing on increasing the efficiency of the educational system or lowering the number of young people not in education or employment. After this, some countries want to promote co-operation among sectors. In some countries, career development is connected to a wider development of the society, in reducing social inequity and polarisation of society, in fighting against discrimination, in meeting the demographic challenges, transforming the economy and in getting prepared for the fourth industrial revolution (Schwab, 2017).

Labour Market Information and Intelligence

Careers information refers to any kind of information in any medium that assists citizens to make meaningful choices about learning and work opportunities. Labour market information (LMI) that is transformed into careers information is critical for informed career decision-making (ELGPN, 2015). The 2017 Symposium in Korea urged that LMI should include an analysis of trends and predictions of future needs. However, attention also needs to be paid to how it can be utilised as part of career learning and how professionals and individuals can increase their capacity to use it critically. Within the country papers, the innovative change in relation to LMI can be described as a continuum from the provision of online portals for LMI to the first efforts at integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into LMI provision.

Most of the national portals for LMI provide information on job characteristics, such as qualifications, open vacancies, employment rates and salaries (e.g., Cambodia, Chile, Ghana, Switzerland). Some countries have enhanced these portals by including information about labour market trends, future skills need and emerging competence areas, available training programmes and general labour market statistics (e.g., Croatia, Estonia). Country papers also include efforts to improve the quality of the LMI through national standards (e.g., Canada) and to widen access to LMI through mobile applications (e.g., Canada, Kosovo) and videos (e.g., Egypt, Estonia, Slovenia). Some countries have allocated specific resources to examine the impacts of fourth industrial revolution to working life and how to use these results in developing the quality of LMI and its use in career development (e.g., Japan, Netherlands, Qatar, Singapore).

The efforts to link AI with LMI include initiatives to facilitate open access to relevant data for different user groups (e.g., France). Scotland has specific emphasis on equipping the career professionals with the most recent available job opportunities and labour market intelligence.

Emphasis and structures for career learning

The country responses in relation to innovation through promoting career management skills (CMS) or by integrating career education into curricula reveal similar trends as in the previous 2017 Symposium in Korea. The 2017 theme synthesis (Lee & Vuorinen, 2017) presented the promotion of career transition competences as a continuum from initial awareness of career education to the development of a sustainable career education system. This year, the innovations can also be seen as a continuum in relation to the level of emphasis of career development and the way that career education is included in curricula. The emphasis of career development ranged from awakening individual awareness of educational and labour market opportunities, making a career choice, career decision-making to acquisition of CMS and transition learning as elements of key competences of lifelong learning. Career learning was presented as a continuum from ad hoc visits and workshops to mandatory elements in the national education system or as elements of a structured lifelong career development portfolio.

Countries with a short history in career development have started to integrate career education in curricula through thematic career days or local career fairs. The emphasis is on information about further education or labour market opportunities. A more explicit role for career education has been reached by developing school-based career guidance programmes and specific career guidance activities within curricula (e.g., Mongolia, Serbia). Other countries describe a shift from psychological services to a more pedagogical approach and more focus on career development as a learning process (e.g., Canada, Croatia, Egypt). The acquisition of career management skills and transition learning as a continuum and a wide-range explicit generic competence is supported through a career passport or a portfolio (Japan, Netherlands, Singapore, the United States). France aims to respond to the diversity of student profiles through supported individualised learning paths from comprehensive education to higher education Countries reported on their efforts to engage the entire school staff in guidance provision in co-operation with designated career professionals and all teachers (e.g., Finland, Ireland, Korea). Features of a sustainable career education system include benchmarks for programme delivery (e.g., England) a national career development framework (Estonia, Ireland, Scotland) or gaining a legal status for career education in curricula (Austria, Finland, Korea, Kosovo, Norway, Scotland).

Career centres

The communique from the 2017 Symposium invited countries to widen access to career development through more diverse delivery channels. The emergence of new delivery channels is visible in different forms of career centres and in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The innovative change in relation to the career centres is connected either to the establishment of the centre as a new form of service delivery or in the transformation of the previous services. The countries inform that they have established career centres to complement career development programmes at different school levels and provide easier access to the wider public. When countries are strengthening their career services one option is to integrate career development programmes into job-centers (e.g., Cambodia) or transform traditional employment agencies into career centres (e.g., India). New career centres within higher education represent innovations, which are targeted to specific user group within one sector (e.g., Serbia, Syria). A number of countries provide examples of one-stop-centres that support young people struggling in school-to-work transitions (e.g., Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Japan, Slovenia, Switzeland). The country papers also include examples of regional career centres which offer career services for adults (e.g., Austria, Germany, France) or provide universal all-age career services (e.g., Scotland).

In Cambodia and Singapore the services of local centres have been extended to reach out target groups through the use of converted vehicles that have been turned into mobile career centres. The countries also describe how the centres have been established through cross-sectoral co-operation (e.g., Estonia, Luxembourg) and an operating model based on regional co-operation as professionals employed by different sectors are brought together into the same local one-stop-guidance centre (e.g., Finland). These kinds of operating models require strong partnerships between the actors in defining the area, goals and forms of co-operation and contractual arrangements for co-funding the services.

Use of Information and Communication Technology

The 2015 Symposium in Des Moines examined how technology was used to enhance career development and public policy. The country papers for this symposium included a similar continuum on the use of ICT which ranged from the emerging to strategic use of technology. On one end of the spectrum, countries are identifying the possibilities offered by ICT and finding ways to apply it to career services, whereas on the other end of the spectrum, the focus is on the systematisation of the use of ICT and the improvement of service efficiency (Kettunen & Vuorinen, 2015).

A number of countries describe that they have established national or institutional websites to disseminate information on educational and labour market opportunities. Websites contain information about learning pathways and include exercises or tools for self-assessment concerning individual interests, personal competences, or attitudes. Recent innovations seek to make effective use of the affordance offered by the latest ICT technology. So, as the Internet become more visual and multi-media career services have followed this trend e.g., videos or virtual reality/tours in education (Egypt, Estonia, England).

Career services increasingly use ICT for communication. This communication between career practitioners and users takes place both asynchronously and synchronously using helplines, videoconferencing or chats (Canada, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany). In addition to career services for the end-users, online communication among the practitioners is promoted through

webinars, e-learning courses and MOOCs (England, Estonia, Kosovo, Scotland). Countries provide some examples of the use of webinars or MOOCs targeted to specific target groups and for collaborative career exploration (Canada, England).

Some countries report that they have been providing open access to real time educational and labour market information for different user groups as well as for policy makers and system developers.

Canada is testing a data management and reporting system (PRIME) to collect and report data on client progress indicators as an evidence base for policy development.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics is in early stage. Countries provide few examples of established pilot projects (France, Korea, Singapore) which aim to facilitate self-assessment, career exploration and job applications.

France is putting technology in the heart of initiatives around guidance and is using technology to bring together the different tools and service providers. Another emphasis is on analysing the economic, social, environmental and ethical issues involved in AI.

Wider strategic use of technology is perceived in initiatives to include career services in other national e-services or in high-level cross-ministerial working groups (Estonia, Finland, France, Qatar, Singapore).

The remaining challenge is on the development of more integrated guidance system that transcend separate, sector-based or provider-centered provision and commitment to the sustainable development of ICT in the career service sector. Further enhancement of synergies among actors and stakeholders at national, regional, and local levels is needed to ensure a common vision and a strategy for innovative change.

Evidence-based practice and policy development

Most of the previous symposia have been examining the evidence-based practice and policy development either as a specific symposium theme or integrated in other themes. The 2011 Symposium noted that if public expenditure on career development systems and services is to be justified, it needs to be supported by clear evidence on their effectiveness and impact. Such evidence needs to include accountability frameworks for routine data collection as well as longitudinal research to determine longer term impact. A focus on the evidence base also underpins good practice in service delivery. The countries were invited to develop a research strategy for practice and policy development and strengthen international co-operation around this theme.

The 2015 Symposium in Des Moines also highlighted these theme and emphasised the importance of return on investment matters as a part of the evaluation of services. In addition to methodological challenges around measuring the impact of career development, other key barriers were connected to the inconsistent use of the evidence that does exist and inadequate resources for the complexity of the task (Sampson, 2015). The last Symposium 2017 in Seoul noted that dynamic societies and labour markets require career development programmes to continually evolve and urged innovative change in basing policies and practices in evidence.

Innovations in relation to the evidence base highlighted in the country papers ranged from reactive, adaptive, innovative change to radically innovative change (Shivappa, 2015). In other words from making changes in response to problems or opportunities as they arise (reactive) to introducing a

practice that is new to the industry (radically innovative change). Most countries report that guidance service providers organise workshops (e.g., Ghana, Mongolia) or conduct satisfaction surveys among their clients and use their feedback to improve the existing services. In some countries, in accordance with a national quality assurance framework the service providers are required to run surveys and studies that inform the opinions of service users as feedback of their performance (e.g., Egypt, Germany). The client satisfaction surveys or collections of user needs can be systemised as part of the services (e.g Estonia, India, Japan and the Netherlands) to make it faster to test new approaches in service provision or changes in the organisation of the services.

From a strategic learning perspective (Senge, 1990), revising activities on the basis of user feedback is the first level of adapting guidance activities to individual needs. It involves assessing the division of labour, contents, and methods of services. User feedback can also be used as a basis for designing the overall service concept for cross-sectoral services (Finland) or setting up new online services (Germany). A more structured way of using the evidence is to connect client satisfaction surveys, stakeholder consultations, expert panels (Hungary) and thematic research to inform the work of national advisory bodies, high-level committees, stakeholder platforms and other type of representative structures (e.g., Canada, France, Qatar, Norway, Singapore). The governments designate or establish agencies or entities to carry out research on guidance to inform the practice and policy development in different sectors (e.g., England, Ireland, Korea).

Some countries report strong connections between the feedback mechanisms and existing guidance policy goals within sectors. A national career development platform allows service providers to co-operate with stakeholders in developing standards, creating analyses of the demands of specific skills and in exchanging information to further enhance the existing services (e.g., Kosovo). The career education objectives are linked with the evaluation of the school performance. The Gatsby benchmarks in England are adapted to inform service providers how to improve the services locally. The PRIME data management and reporting system (Canada), e-Guidance (Denmark) and the Adult Guidance Management System (Ireland) are examples of efforts in developing sustainable online data collection which can be used to inform the evidence base.

In Scotland, the development of the evidence base is connected with regulated national equity impact assessment. Evaluation and research takes a central position in the development and delivery of services offers with a central team supporting this process. This process is co-designed with researchers, service providers and representatives of customer groups. The outcomes of the inspection and review programmes are used in refining the services, but the career professionals are equipped with the most recent knowledge of the field.

Professional development

The 2017 Symposium in Korea examined the relevance of the training of career practitioners as a response to the changes in the labour market. The participants were invited to support professionalism by involving stakeholders in the design and delivery of the training, develop approaches for inter-professional working, support the development of professional associations and recognise the need for quality initial training and ongoing professional development. The country papers include examples of innovative change in the professionalisation of career professional in a continuum ranging from ad hoc courses and efforts to establish a training programme to systematic support for innovations through training and continuous professional development (CPD).

Countries with a short tradition of career development are paying special attention to the establishment of ad hoc training modules and degree programmes for the staff responsible for service provision or the development of online resources for the service providers (e.g., Chile, Egypt, Ghana, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia). In those countries, where specific training programmes are available, the practitioners are encouraged to join national professional associations (e.g., Netherlands) or to obtain voluntary certification using national competence frameworks (e.g., Canada, the United States). In some countries, employers are organising in-house training for their own staff members (e.g., Estonia, Hungary, Korea, Qatar, Serbia, Singapore).

Efforts to systematise the current training can be done through a national programme recognition framework (e.g., Ireland), which details competences required for professionals working in the education and training sectors. In Kosovo, the national online tool includes support for career practitioners to implement the new national career guidance system and collect evidence about career guidance and labour market.

Countries with more structured national co-ordination of career services have been able to integrate training and research more systemically. In Germany, the University of PES is developing tools to prevent dropouts from VET apprenticeships together with the trainers and researchers. Finland is supporting the establishment of regional One-Stop-Guidance Centres with targeted in-service training programme focusing on multi-professional and cross-disciplinary teamwork. Norway describes a dialogue between the newly established Master degree programme and stakeholders to ensure that the programme is in line with the recent developments in the field and the society. Scotland is committed to widening and diversifying the pool of talent who work in the field through work-based learning pathways, aligned to their goal of increased equality of opportunity for all. The professionalisation is supported with individualised learning programmes and CPD, delivered through the national Skills Academy in partnerships with higher education institutions.

The use of technology in guidance services seems to be the most common theme in the new CDP programmes. The focus of the training programmes around ICT vary from instructions on how to use existing new online tools and to support the implementation of the new national guidance system (e.g., England, Kosovo, Scotland), to how to integrate technology into career guidance (e.g., Norway), and how to improve and transform guidance practice through training, which is based on research on the practitioners' experiences in the use of technology (e.g., Finland).

Implementation of innovative change

A key factor in innovative change and the transformation of guidance services is the engagement of key stakeholders (Nykänen et al., 2012). One tool for achieving this is the strategic learning loop (Senge, 1990) which contains four stages: (1) analyse the existing state of the service provision and drivers for change; (2) based on this analysis establish a new vision for the services; (3) communicate and engage others with the vision; and (4) implement the new policy in line with goals, roles, responsibilities and schedules. The implementation of innovative change in the country papers appears in a continuum from informing others about the innovative new tools to joint systemic efforts across sectors.

Some of the countries state that there are no national policies to support innovation and change or that previous national initiatives have been terminated. In the country papers there are examples of

efforts to inform the users and practitioners about national pilots or new services through websites (e.g., Tunisia), national career days/weeks or through targeted marketing and training programmes for selected professional groups. In a number of countries, the development of career services have been included in national sectoral strategies in education or employment (e.g., Cambodia, Chile, Mongolia) or in national programmes for specific user groups (e.g., Denmark, US). In Europe, one option has been to link the innovative change to EU funded national initiatives (e.g., Hungary, the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovenia) or within projects supported by international donors (e.g., Egypt, Kosovo, Sri Lanka).

Countries with federal structure or strongly decentralised administration have linked the implementation of innovations to regional initiatives on skills development (e.g., Canada, Netherlands, Switzerland) or to jointly agreed partnerships with stakeholders, associations or the private sector (e.g., Canada, the Netherlands, the United States). Cross-sectoral efforts for implementation are also integrated in national cross-ministerial strategies for career development (e.g., Croatia, Egypt, Qatar)

Efforts to link technical innovations within the national e-Governance strategies are presented (e.g., in Austria, Japan, Estonia, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland). Countries also provide examples of high-level working groups focusing on the interoperability of existing and future e-Services for citizens (e.g., Finland). France has established a State Lab Project on artificial intelligence to promote innovations. Most systematic support for innovations is present in countries, which have established national co-ordination units or a research centres for career development to follow-up the implementation of national strategies, guidelines or standards (e.g., England, Germany, Ireland, Korea, Norway, Scotland).

3. Conclusions

In analysing the country papers for the 2015 Symposium in Des Moines, Kettunen and Sampson (2018) note that the use and integration of technologies with effective practices are not only related to technology but are closely connected to the integrated lifelong guidance policies and development of delivery methods targeted to different groups of users. Similarly, promoting overall innovative change will require a jointly agreed cross-ministerial strategy for career guidance and a common conceptual framework for service delivery and funding. In addition, there is a need for a formal commitment by relevant policy sectors to promote the innovative change and transformation of career development services as part of the overall development of the society.

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