

Career Development at the Crossroads Communiqué 2017



SUMMARY

The eighth International Symposium for Career Development and Public Policy was hosted in Seoul, Korea from the 18th – 21st June 2017 . The Symposium was organised by the National Career Development Center at Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET) and by the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) and sponsored by the South Korean Ministry of Education and HRD Korea. It was attended by 107 delegates representing 21 countries, international labour market experts, and officials of international policy research and development organisations: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

The Symposium discussed changes in the labour market and how career development can help societies to respond to and shape such changes. Career development is both an individual and a social good and results in a range of positive impacts. It can be a critical lever for optimising the functioning of the labour market, helping societies to manage periods of rapid change and instability and supporting individuals to manage learning and work throughout their lives.

Recommendations to countries

How changes in work organisation are shaping career development systems

- Build a national, cross-sectoral, career development strategy.
- Recognise that individuals' careers pass through the jurisdictions of a range of government departments.
- Involve employers in building career development systems.
- Widen access to career development services.
- Organise career development on a lifelong basis.

Making career development programmes relevant and effective

- Involve key stakeholders (parents, employers, educators and citizens) in the design and delivery of career development programmes and services.
- Ensure individuals have access to work experience and work-related learning.
- Provide good quality labour market information (LMI).
- Make use of technology.
- Support employers to provide career development services for their staff.
- Base policies and practice in evidence.

Ensuring the relevance of career professional training and development

- Involve stakeholders in the design and delivery of career professional training and development.
- Actively support professionalism.
- Develop approaches for effective inter-professional working.
- Ensure high quality initial training.
- Support the development of professional associations.
- Recognise the need for ongoing professional development.

Building career development skills

- Clearly define career development skills.
- Create a common conversation around career development skills.
- Integrate career development skills into the education and employment systems.
- Actively support advocacy by career professionals for the use of career development skills.

INTRODUCTION

The eighth International Symposium for Career Development and Public Policy was hosted in Seoul, Korea from the 18th – 21st June 2017. The Symposium was organised by the Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET) and by the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) and sponsored by the South Korean Ministry of Education and HRD Korea. It was attended by 107 delegates representing 21 countries, international labour market experts, and officials of international policy research and development organisations: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), and the European Training Foundation (ETF).¹

In advance of the Symposium, participants submitted country papers and four thematic syntheses were prepared. These are available on the ICCDPP website (<http://iccdpp2017.org/>) alongside this Communiqué and provide an evidence base for participating countries and international organisations. This Communiqué draws together the international good practice identified at the Symposium to describe how an effective career development system can be built.

Career development² helps individuals, families and communities to learn about education and work, make successful transitions and build their careers. It can be provided in the education system, in employment services and in workplaces. The activities which comprise career development programmes are diverse and can be funded and delivered in a variety of ways. In countries where career development is well established and available to substantial sections of the population, there is public policy involvement and the provision of public funding. Career development is used by governments to achieve a range of public policy goals.

THEME 1: HOW CHANGES IN WORK ORGANISATION ARE SHAPING CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

The way in which work is organised is shifting in response to political, economic, social, environmental and technological influences. These changes are happening at all levels from global changes through to the decisions made in individual firms about business models, training, restructuring and pay. Many of these changes, notably trends around business models, automation, outsourcing and demographic shifts have led to concerns about whether labour markets will be able to provide sufficient jobs and how existing working practices will be transformed. Some commentators have expressed concerns about growing inequality, precarity, lengthening youth transitions to the workplace and increasing labour market polarisation.

For individuals these changes increase insecurity. Time honoured career strategies such as pursuing established qualifications are no longer paying off for all and some existing career structures appear to be weakening. Meanwhile, even in economies with high unemployment, employers continue to report skills shortages and skills misalignment. These shifts manifest differently across the world, but career development is a common element of the way in which many countries are trying to address these challenges. As career development programmes and services are reformed to respond to the changing context they need to remain relevant, current and responsive to labour market realities.

¹ The National Career Development Association and the Asia-Pacific Career Development Association were also represented at the Symposium.

² The activity described as 'career development' in this Communiqué is also known by other terms such as career guidance and lifelong guidance in different countries.

Recommendations to countries

1. **Build a national, cross-sectoral, career development strategy.** Career development systems are complex and interact with a wide range of other systems e.g. education, training, employment and welfare. Developing strategy is critical to ensure that they work effectively within such complex systems. The challenges faced by different countries vary but countries can draw on international practice as they develop local strategies. Creating a hub to co-ordinate strategy and drive implementation can increase the impact and speed of uptake of such strategies.
2. **Recognise that individuals' careers pass through the jurisdictions of a range of government departments.** Careers take place across life and in many domains. This results in a need for cross-ministerial co-operation, especially between employment or labour ministries and education ministries to ensure effective career development systems.
3. **Involve employers in building career development systems.** Employers can provide information on current and projected demand and help to shape the supply of skills and labour. Career development can also be used to reflect the experience of individuals back to employers and to shape employment practices and the demand side of the labour market.
4. **Widen access to career development services.** The current and future organisation of the labour market increases the need for career development for citizens across the life span. Attention should be paid to how easily citizens can access career development support through a range of channels (face-to-face, telephone and online).
5. **Organise career development on a lifelong basis.** Career development needs to start early (in kindergarten or primary school) and access to support needs to be available throughout life. People make multiple career transitions across a lifetime and need the capacity to manage their careers and the opportunity to access support at points of crisis and transition.

THEME 2: MAKING CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES RELEVANT AND EFFECTIVE

Dynamic societies and labour markets require career development programmes to continually evolve. Many countries are developing, reforming and reimagining their programmes. Such system development can be driven from above (through legislation and public policy) or from below (by citizens, employers, professional associations, professionals and other stakeholders). It should also be influenced by the growing evidence base within the field.

Recommendations to countries

6. **Involve key stakeholders (parents, employers, educators and citizens) in the design and delivery of career development programmes and services.** Individuals' careers are embedded in the wider systems of family, education and work. It is important that stakeholders have opportunities to both shape and support career development systems. Key to this is agreeing a common language and developing spaces and fora for discussion.
7. **Ensure individuals have access to work experience and work-related learning.** Inclusion of work experience in education can support transition and build a bridge between learning and work. Similarly, ensuring job variety and job rotation can support in-work transitions.
8. **Provide good quality labour market information (LMI).** LMI underpins effective career development programmes. It should include analysis of trends and predictions of future need. 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.

9. **Make use of technology.** The internet and other technologies offer opportunities for widening access and improving efficiency. However, there is a need to ensure the quality of technological tools and to support individuals to use them critically. Technology can be used in a range of ways to support career development including e-guidance systems, online career assessments, portfolios and as part of blended delivery with face-to-face services.
10. **Support employers to provide career development services for their staff.** Employers can build on existing human resource management processes to create career development support to the mutual benefit of them and their staff. Trade unions, professional associations and the career development profession may be key allies in such processes.
11. **Base policies and practice in evidence.** Career development has an established evidence base which should inform programme design and delivery. It is also important that new interventions are evaluated and the sophistication of the evidence base is developed to identify the impact on employers, communities and nations as well as on individuals. There would be value in increased international cooperation on evidence development.

THEME 3: ENSURING THE RELEVANCE OF CAREER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The shifting organisation of work and the objectives of public policy require an effective career development profession. Many countries are working to enhance training and career development practice and seeking to improve currency, consistency, quality and efficacy.

Recommendations to countries

12. **Involve stakeholders in the design and delivery of career professional training and development.** Ensure that key stakeholders, notably employers, worker organisations, professional associations, employers of career professionals, and citizens, have opportunities to influence the training and development of the profession. Career development professionals should be advocates for the field working to engage stakeholders, explain the value of career development and build effective working relationships.
13. **Actively support professionalism.** The practice of career development requires skills, knowledge and networks which need to be developed through training and experience. There is value in enhancing the prestige of the profession and clearly defining training, qualifications and regulation to ensure professional competence and ethical practice.
14. **Develop approaches for effective inter-professional working.** Career professionals need to work closely with a wide range of allied professionals, including teachers and human resource professionals. Career professionals need the skills for inter-professional working. Similarly, allied professionals, such as teachers, need to be supported to increase their expertise in career development through its inclusion in initial training and continuing professional development.
15. **Ensure high quality initial training.** All training for career professionals should be led by career development experts and should involve employers and other key stakeholders in the development of curricula. Training should ensure that career professionals understand the changing labour market, are able to work with employers and other educators and have the skills to make use of labour market information.
16. **Support the development of professional associations.** Professional associations provide a key way for professional expertise to be shared and practice to be developed.

17. **Recognise the need for ongoing professional development.** Career professionals need a mechanism for keeping up to date. Such professional development should include spending time with employers to ensure that they have up to date labour market knowledge.

THEME 4: BUILDING CAREER DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Career development is a process of learning. Through participating in career development programmes individuals learn about the world and develop their capacity to make an effective contribution to it. Rapid changes in the labour market mean that many individuals struggle to see what skills they will need to navigate the labour market and build successful careers. Career development programmes articulate what needs to be learnt as career development skills.³ Such career development skills describe the skills that individuals need to navigate, respond to and influence the labour market and to develop their own working lives.

Recommendations to countries

18. **Clearly define career development skills.** National systems should define career development skills and develop a consensus around them.
19. **Create a common conversation around career development skills.** Discussion of career development skills should draw together education and employment and support the understanding of clients about how best to develop their careers. The development of a national career competency framework may be a useful tool to support such conversations. Frameworks should be developed with input from employers and other key stakeholders.
20. **Integrate career development skills into the education and employment systems.** Career development skills provide a series of learning outcomes and can offer the basis for a careers curriculum. They can also be used to inform human resources frameworks within employment. A key component of this is developing approaches to assessing career development skills.
21. **Actively support advocacy by career professionals for the use of career development skills.** Careers professionals need to have a good understanding of career development skills and be able to advise others about their use in the education and employment systems.

CONCLUSION

Career development is an individual and a social good. It can be a critical lever for optimising the functioning of the labour market and supporting individuals to manage learning and work throughout their lives. The labour market is currently going through a period of rapid change and career development can be used to help societies, individuals and organisations to respond to and shape such changes. Developing effective systems requires a mix of bottom up and top down actions. Public policy has an important role to play in developing and refining career development systems. However, it is critical that governments work in partnership with professional associations, career professionals, educators, employers and citizens to design and deliver systems that are fit for purpose.

³ The term 'career development skills' is used in this Communiqué but alternatives such as 'career management skills' or 'career competencies' are used in some countries.