

## BACKGROUND

### THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIA ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY MOVEMENT

It is now 14 years since the idea of an international symposium on career development and public policy was first enunciated. Career guidance service managers and experts from UK, New Zealand and Canada, concerned at fundamental shifts in the traditional notion of job, work, and social contract, at the globalisation and localisation of work, and at changing views of roles and responsibilities of governments and citizens, agreed that policy related to the structure and delivery of career development needed to undergo radical change in order to service new public policy goals and needs. They recognised that these challenges were not country or culture specific and that international collaboration could enhance public-policy responses to such changes. Supported by colleagues in Australia, they set up an organising committee to host the first symposium and Canada agreed to seek financial support from government and other agencies and organisations to fund the organisation of the Symposium.

The first Symposium was held in Ottawa, Canada, in May 1999. Its theme was appropriately *International Collaboration for National Action*. Countries were invited to send country teams with a recommendation to have equal numbers of policy makers<sup>1</sup> and career professionals (e.g. service delivery managers, trainers, researchers, leaders of associations of practitioners). Fourteen countries sent teams to the first symposium representing North and South America, Europe and Asia Pacific. Since 1999, four further such international symposia have taken place:

| Year | Location          | Theme   | Participants   |
|------|-------------------|---|--|
| 2001 | Vancouver, Canada | Connecting Career Development with Public Policy      | 17 countries,<br>4 international organisations,<br>1 international association |
| 2006 | Sydney, Australia | Shaping the Future: Connecting Career Development and | 22 countries,<br>6 international   |

<sup>1</sup> Until the establishment of the European Lifelong Guidance Forum in December 2007, the international symposia were the only international forum where policy makers with responsibility for career guidance in the education and employment sectors could meet with each other and with delivery managers, trainers, researchers and leaders of associations of guidance practitioners.

|      |                            | Workforce Development  | organisations  |
|------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 2007 | Aviemore,<br>Scotland, UK  | Growth, Groups and Geographies:<br>Maximising the Value of Career<br>Development for Sustainable<br>Growth and Social Equity       | 26 countries,<br><br>5 international<br>organisations                        |
| 2009 | Wellington, New<br>Zealand | Technology, Culture, Evidence, and<br>Citizen Voice: Implications for<br>Career Development Policies,<br>Strategies and Operations | 23 countries,<br><br>5 international<br>organisations and regional<br>bodies |

In addition, in 2003, a Conference based on the same principles was held in Toronto, Canada, on the theme 'Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap'. Sponsored jointly by OECD and the Government of Canada, it was held in association with the EC, WB and IAEVG, and had representatives from 26 countries and 5 international organisations.

A key feature of the Symposia is their process: countries are required to develop country papers in response to the Symposium themes in advance of the event. A synthesis of responses is made and key questions for participants developed. These questions become the focus of small group discussions during the event. The content of the discussions is distilled into a Communique that outlines the key outcomes of the discussion and sets the direction for future actions at international and national levels.

The Symposia with their focus on policy provided the stimulus for a host of international collaborative actions both directly and indirectly:

- The OECD review of policies for career guidance (2001-3)
- The European Commission (EC) reviews of policies for career guidance undertaken by CEDEFOP within Europe (2002-4) and by the European Training Foundation (ETF) with European Union accession and neighbouring countries (2003 to present)
- The World Bank (WB) review of policies for career guidance in middle-income and developing countries (2003-4)
- Inter-institutional cooperation between the EC, OECD and WB on the policy reviews, paving the way for the joint EC-OECD publication *Career guidance- a handbook for policy makers* (2004) and the establishment of the *International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy* (2004).

The Symposia have also acted as catalysts for national level initiatives and actions as a result of the discussions it stimulated between policy makers and career professionals in the country teams.

## THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Statement of Intent that issued at the end of the first Symposium (1999) called for the establishment of structures and processes at international level in order

- to share experience and good practice relating to policy, innovation, research and career development practice,
- to harness the support of international organisations, and
- to support equality of opportunity across nations.



It took several years to concretise this idea. In 2004, the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) was established at CEDEFOP, an agency of the EC, in Brussels, Belgium<sup>2</sup>, with endorsement from the EC, OECD and the WB, and with support from the Irish Ministry of Education and Science.

The primary function of ICCDPP is to promote policy sharing and learning in the field of career development in both education and employment sectors. It collects, analyses and publishes<sup>3</sup> good examples of national policies and strategies, and policy research and evaluation reports. It provides information and advice to ministries, organisations and individuals on career development policy issues. Its secondary function is to undertake follow-up actions assigned to it by the International Symposia, to assist the organization of International Symposia, and to act as an international focal point between symposia. ICCDPP is an organisational member of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) and of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), both of which it collaborates with. Its Executive Board consists of policy developers, agency delivery managers, and international career development experts from Australasia, North America, and Europe. The Centre has been funded at different points in time through voluntary contributions from education ministries (Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg), national career services (New Zealand, Scotland), and national associations (NCDA, USA).

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<sup>2</sup> ICCDPP relocated to Strasbourg, France in 2006, and to Wellington, New Zealand, in 2010.

<sup>3</sup> [www.iccdpp.org](http://www.iccdpp.org) Material is published by country, world region, and by thematic categories aligned to the EC-OECD publication *Career guidance- a handbook for policy makers*. Proceedings of previous symposia can be accessed there. While the main language of the website is English, materials are available in 11 languages.