

Appendix 1

Country Name: **Israel**

Country team (names, positions, email addresses, telephone numbers):

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Section 1	A brief outline of your country – demographics, population and career service provision – target groups and providers (maximum 300 words)
<p>Geography</p> <p>Israel is a small country with a very diverse geography: desert conditions in the south, and forested mountains in the north. Israel, whose capital is Jerusalem, is located at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea in western Asia. It is bounded to the north by Lebanon, the northeast by Syria, the east by Jordan and the West Bank, and to the southwest by Egypt, with this border also being the border between Asia and Africa. West of Israel is the Mediterranean Sea, which makes up the majority of Israel's 273 kilometres coastline. Israel has a small coastline on the Red Sea in the south, bordering the Jordanian town of Akaba.</p> <p>Demography</p> <p>According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2010 the population of Israel was approximately 7.7 million people, of whom 75% were Jews, 20% Arabs, (18% Muslims and 2% Christians), and the rest various other minorities, among whom the Druze were the largest (1.5%). Approximately 68% of the Jews are Israeli-born, with the remainder having immigrated from Europe and America (approx. 22%, mostly from the Former Soviet Union), and from Asia and Africa (approx. 10%, mostly from Ethiopia). With respect to religious affiliation of Israeli Jews above the age of 20, 20% consider themselves "secular", 55% "traditional", 17% orthodox, and 8% ultra-orthodox (<i>haredi</i>).</p> <p>Labour market</p> <p>Reports of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2008) show that the labor force participation rate (LFPR) in Israel in 2008 was 70.9% for aged 24-65: for the Jewish population LFPR was 77.5% (for OECD countries it was 72.0%), 81.7% for men (similar to OECD countries) and 73.5% for women (significantly higher than for the OECD countries, 61.6%); for the Arab population LFPR in those ages was 48.4%, 72.1% for men and only 24.0% for women; for the ultra-orthodox at those ages LFPR was 48.6%, only 40.4% for men and 56.7% for women. An important national target for the coming years is to increase participation in the labor market for all population sectors, especially among ultra-orthodox Jewish men and Arab women.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Education is compulsory for 11 years and free for all children between 5 and 15 years of age. Recent years has seen a significant increase in the number of Israeli colleges [beyond the country's 8 veteran research universities] providing undergraduate and Master level graduate studies throughout the country, as well as by new majors and fields of study emerging in academic studies (e.g., biotechnology). The universities and the many of the public colleges provide special one-year preparatory programs aimed at boosting chances for admission to higher education institutions. A large proportion of participants enrolled in these programs come from Israel's peripheral regions and many from families with lower than average SES.</p> <p>Main national career guidance services</p> <p>Career guidance services are typically offered from the post-high school level, in post-secondary educational institutions and in other private and public facilities. The largest single provider of employment and career guidance today is the Israel National Employment Service with each of the 70 employment offices staffed by a trained para-professional employment counselor and providing referrals to contracted vocational psychologists for career counseling and testing.</p>	

Section 2	Taking each of the four general symposium themes (see below), describe the two greatest strengths and two greatest weaknesses relating to each theme in your country (maximum 100 words for each strength and weakness; therefore maximum 400 words per theme and maximum 1,600 words in this section).	
Theme 1: Political, economic and social changes and the changing role of career guidance and career guidance policies		
<p>Strength 1</p> <p>Families have traditionally received monthly government child allowances, which have been reduced in recent years. This has prompted certain sectors of the population, who have otherwise distanced themselves from the workforce, to now seek appropriate remunerative employment. This has fed the need for trained career guidance professionals with multi-cultural expertise.</p>	<p>Weakness1</p> <p>Israel's school system through high school has yet to place career information and guidance as a priority. Rather, many other social and life skills are being addressed in the school setting. In addition, the compulsory 3-year army duty [from age 18-21] has delayed much of career planning to the early 20's, often resulting in career decisions being made with less than full information and without the developing career maturity often characteristic of other western educational programs.</p>	
<p>Strength 2</p> <p>Increasing outsourcing [partial privatization] of professional career services by public institutions [eg., Employment Service, Labor ministry, Defense ministry, Immigrant absorption ministry] offers more opportunities for professional services for State-wide previously underserved peripheral populations.</p>	<p>Weakness 2</p> <p>Introduction of controversial welfare to work schemes has shown a degree of effectiveness in advancing hard to place individuals, but the jury is still out regarding the recommended package of cost-efficient services.</p>	

Theme 2: Lifelong guidance policy as a part of integrated human resource development policies – challenges and opportunities

Strength 1

With a dynamic labor market, including fewer tenured positions, more employment mobility [forced or voluntary] tends to generate more need for career consultation. In a small country, certain professions may become saturated, requiring retraining, early pensioners with longer life-span are more likely to seek consultation in order to plan their less structured active years. A growing Internet presence with career information and participatory career forums will allow life-long access to most population sectors.

Weakness 1

Life-long guidance is still far from being institutionalized in Israel. Current counseling and guidance programs tend to be time-bound at traditional career decision points, especially post-Army training or educational deliberation.

Strength 2

The coaching profession has expanded greatly in recent years to include highly trained professionals, albeit in a currently unregulated field. One of the key coaching areas of emphasis is career-related issues, such as fulfilling career ambitions, retraining, and resolving work-related interpersonal conflicts. Positive outcomes have been derived from individual and group coaching interventions, especially empowering under-served and income assurance populations.

Weakness 2

An abundance of non-profits and NGO's have taken up providing under- served population sectors employment-related services. Aside from making important contributions to these populations, this trend reflects a shirking of government responsibility, with currently insufficient coordination and quality control among the providers.

Theme 3: The changing world and the changing role of career guidance – skills and competencies for lifelong guidance practitioners

Strength 1

With the expansion of the ultra-orthodox Jewish participation in the workforce, school counselors and career counselors from that sector are being formally trained in recent years.

Weakness 1

There is a need for expanded formal and informal career and employment counselor training to include career challenges such as working with a multi-cultural clientele, ADHD and learning disabled clientele.

Strength 2

Increasingly widespread Internet access to career information and other tools to advance career and employment decisions.

Weakness 2

Currently inadequate lifelong career awareness and lack of long term planning in general. Need for internalizing dynamic concepts of employability among working populations and among employers.

Theme 4: Evidence-based practice; evidence-based policies

Strength 1

An NGO research facility has engaged in follow-up evaluations of the local welfare to work scheme that operated recently for 3 years and supplied significant data for future planning. Other career empowerment seed initiatives at the TEVET NGO has required research follow-up on a wide range of programming with sectors not traditionally part of the workforce.

Weakness 1

Most large-scale guidance services do not have systematic follow-up mechanism to assess effectiveness. In order to justify government expenditures on career guidance, proper multi-measure effectiveness criteria need to be determined and an efficient evaluation mechanism, perhaps Internet-based needs to be activated. Client satisfaction can no longer satisfy as the sole effectiveness criterion.

Strength 2

As outsourcing becomes a standard service mode, more built-in evaluations can be more easily conducted: part of every grant can now be allocated to career and employment follow-up, with concrete results a pre-condition for remuneration.

Weakness 2

Long-term follow-up is not yet available to determine short- and long-term implications of training. For instance what is the profile of the ideal training candidate? How can training accommodate a large learning disabled population?

Section 3	Looking at the themes, prioritise them according to the most important ones for your country team to explore further and learn about at the symposium. (1 = most important – 4 = least important)								
Political, economic and social changes and the changing role of career guidance and career guidance policies	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td colspan="4">Priority</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> </table>	Priority				1	2	3	4
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Section 4	Thinking about the themes, describe up to three high-level key public policy and/or practice initiatives currently being advanced or considered in your country (write no more than 100 words on each). If it is possible, please say to which of the themes each initiative is most closely linked.
<p>High-level key public policy/practice initiative 1 In light of Israel's relatively low overall participation in the national labor market, several population groups have been targeted and national funds have been granted for initiatives to empower and enhance their employability [vocational training programs and higher education] and their employment status: especially ultra-orthodox Jews, Arab women. Linked most closely to Theme 1.</p>	
<p>High-level key public policy/practice initiative 2 Legislative initiatives have been passed to allow handicapped populations more and better quality access to the labor market. For example, learning disabled candidates will be allotted the recommended adaptations to testing situations in vocational training and in higher education. Work situations will be more accommodating to various handicapped workers. Current efforts are aimed at enforcing passed legislation. Linked most closely to Theme: 1</p>	
<p>High-level key public policy/practice initiative 3 Job maintenance and advancement – In several NGO initiatives based on a work-first principle, new formulae are being explored that would lead to career advancement, one avenue which aims to help pull workers out from below the poverty line. Linked most closely to Theme 2.</p>	

Section 5	Future Focus – what are the key elements of your team’s overall vision for career policy, practice and research in your country? (write no more than 30 words). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximizing Internet tools for distance guidance• Professionalizing career guidance providers• Setting up on-going guidance service evaluation
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