

COMMUNIQUE
Third International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy:
Shaping the future: Connecting career development
and workforce development
21 – 24 April 2006

Teams of delegates representing 22 countries and 6 international organisations met in Sydney to discuss the interface between career development and workforce development. The participation of delegations from so many different countries demonstrated the growing global recognition of the value of career development for citizens.

This communiqué summarises the conclusions of the Symposium on nine key principles for connecting career development to workforce development, and on an action plan for implementing these principles.

Key principles

The symposium reaffirmed the international definition of career development as covering services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make education, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. The delegates agreed that:

1. Career development is a significant contributor to the development of human capital, as an important engine for economic growth and social cohesion. The role of career development in this respect needs to be more widely recognised.
2. In particular, career development services can play an important role in helping governments to:
 - a. improve labour supply;
 - b. address skill shortages;
 - c. raise the level of human capital;
 - d. improve the quality of human capital.
3. Career development is critical to workforce development, in three respects:
 - a. *Workforce preparation* - supporting the career development of young people prior to entering the labour market.
 - b. *Workforce adaptability and sustainability* - supporting the career development of employed workers.
 - c. *Workforce reintegration* - supporting the career development of adults in and out of the labour market, and between jobs in different enterprises.
4. If career development is to support workforce development in these ways, high-quality career development services need to be available to all citizens throughout their active lives, from primary school through to the third age.
5. To support effective career development services, governments need to establish effective mechanisms for collaboration across government departments and agencies, and also for working closely with employers, with career development professionals, and with a wide range of community partners.

6. In many developed countries, a major current deficiency is adequate career development support for existing workers. There is an important role for public policy in:
 - a. Encouraging and supporting employers in providing career development services for their employees.
 - b. Assuring access to career development services in the wider community.
7. Particular attention needs to be paid to the role of career development services in achieving government policy objectives relating to demographic challenges such as migration and ageing workforces.
8. Career development needs to be linked closely to improved methods for recognising skills and competencies derived from informal and non-formal as well as formal learning.
9. The design of career development programmes, and of training of career development practitioners, needs to be based on a close understanding of the economic and cultural diversity across countries and across communities.

Action plan

Each country team agreed a national action plan to implement these principles, and shared its plans with the other participants. The importance of continued opportunities for countries to learn from each other was affirmed. Particular emphasis was placed on the mutual benefits of enhanced communication between countries at different stages of economic development.

More specifically, the symposium agreed:

1. To encourage the establishment or further development of national centres and other appropriate mechanisms for career leadership in public policy.
2. To support the role of the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) in providing an international communication network for such national centres and more generally in strengthening the relationship between career development and public policy.
3. To urge the ICCDPP to pay particular attention to:
 - a. Fostering ways of developing a stronger evidence base on career development services, including data on their impact.
 - b. Sharing international experience on the relative efficacy and relevance of different structures for strategic leadership within countries.
 - c. Stimulating comparative study across countries of training programmes for career development practitioners.
 - d. Exploring the implications of cultural diversity for career development and public policy.
 - e. Supporting the development of national leaders at the interface between career development and public policy.
4. To use the next global International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, to be held in Scotland in October 2007, to benchmark progress on this action plan.

Addendum

Since the Communique was produced, there has been a further development which the Symposium delegates wish to acknowledge and endorse.

Participants from developing countries have come together and created a network to focus specifically on issues related to their respective situations.

This development is supported by the addition of a further Key principle (10) and an additional Action step (5)

Key principle (10)

It is important to recognise that the career development in developing countries could be different from the experiences of developed nations. There is an important role for public policy in encouraging and supporting systematic research that would throw further light on the prevailing orientations to work, livelihoods and careers which would then lead to the formulation of reliable and valid methods for the delivery of career development services, relevant to the developing world context.

Action plan (5)

To support the creation of a Developing Countries Network for Career Guidance and Counselling linked to the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy. This network would work together to develop a deeper understanding of the career development needs that characterise the developing world context.