



Fourth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy

22 – 25 October 2007
Aviemore, Scotland

Growth, Groups and Geographies: Maximising the Value of Career Development for Sustainable Growth and Social Equity

Teams of delegates representing 26 countries and five international organisations met to address the interface between career development¹ and public policy on economic and social development. The countries covered all continents, and represented a substantial number of advanced economies but also a wide range of countries at different stages of economic development.

This communiqué:

- Reviews the *progress* made since earlier symposia in the series
- Identifies key *principles* emerging from the discussions at the Symposium
- Sets *plans* for national action and for continued international collaboration

1. Progress

The Symposium noted the substantial progress made in strengthening the interface between career development and public policy in many countries and regions of the world, and the significant catalytic role played by the previous International Symposia in stimulating these developments. In particular:

1.1 National reviews of lifelong career development services, using the model initially developed in the OECD Career Guidance Policy Review, have now been carried out in 55 countries.

1.2 National consultative structures have been established in a number of countries.

1.3 World-region networks are being established, notably the new European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, the regional network for policy-makers in the Mediterranean region (Middle East and North Africa) (managed

¹ Defined as covering services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their life, to make education, training and occupational choices and to manage their career.

by the European Training Foundation), and the Developing Countries Network for Career Guidance and Counselling.

1.4 Considerable progress has been made by many countries in building stronger policies for lifelong career development, and in creating stronger mechanisms and relationships to inform future policy development.

2. Principles

The Symposium explored five major themes. It was agreed that:

Theme A: Blending Economic and Social Goals

2.1 Career development services need to balance economic and social goals, creating a blend which focuses on the development of individuals and communities.

2.2 Career development services need to be more closely linked to community development and to social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Theme B: Strategic Leadership

2.3 Consultative structures need to have multi-stakeholder membership in order to reflect a lifelong career development perspective and to address the needs of all citizens. The work of such collaborative bodies needs to be informed both by the career development profession and by users and potential users of services.

2.4 Quality assurance of career development services is, in most countries, inadequately developed. Stronger tools and practices are needed to measure service quality, both for improving professional practice and for credibility with policy-makers.

Theme C: Harnessing Diversity

2.5 The distinctive pattern of cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, gender, language, disability, migration/immigration and social-exclusion issues needs to be identified at country, regional and local levels, in order to ensure effective career development services, and should be addressed in the training of career development practitioners.

2.6 While it is possible to target career development services to clients with specific needs and backgrounds, the preferred principle should be to structure universal services in sufficiently flexible forms to take account of the variety of client needs and contexts.

Theme D: Impact Evidence and Impact Measurement

2.7 Data collection (on usage levels, user feedback, and user outcomes) for policy and systems development is critical to the sustainability of career development services. The nature of such data needs to be based on a dialogue between policy-makers and practitioners.

2.8 Care needs to be taken to ensure that the focus on outcomes does not undermine the responsibility of career development services to respect the values and interests of users.

Theme E: Role of the Citizen

2.9 Actively involving citizens in the design, strategic development and delivery of career development services can enhance user engagement and foster sensitivity to user diversity.

2.10 Varied ways of engaging users and potential users should be explored, and should be evaluated to influence career development policies.

3. Plans

Each Country Team produced a national action plan to incorporate these principles.

The importance of continued opportunities to support and learn from each other was affirmed. In this respect, the Symposium agreed:

3.1 To encourage the establishment or further development of national fora and other appropriate mechanisms for career leadership in public policy.

3.2 To develop stronger national mechanisms for career professionals to provide professional leadership and policy advice across the career development field.

3.3 To encourage the development of world-region networks for career development and public policy in areas of the world where they do not currently exist.

3.4 To support the role of the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) in providing an international communication network to strengthen the relationship between career development and public policy. This should include support for national and world-region symposia in the intervals between the global symposia.

3.5 To urge the ICCDPP to pay particular attention to:

a) Developing links with relevant international bodies (including OECD, UNESCO, World Bank, ILO, European Commission, European Training Foundation). This should include encouraging reviews of lifelong career development services in further countries, and such reviews being repeated on a regular (perhaps every ten years) basis.

b) Sharing information on data-collection strategies including impact evidence.

c) Supporting the Developing Countries Network for Career Guidance and Counselling.

d) Supporting the collaboration between ACP International, the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and other relevant bodies in developing a more coherent global structure of lifelong professional standards in the career development field, and particularly the relationship of this work to public policy.

3.6 To use the next global International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, to be held in New Zealand in November 2009, to benchmark progress on this action plan, and to examine in more detail the role of the citizen in career development services and its relationship to professional standards.