

Chapter 7

## Career guidance and orientation

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## **1 Introduction**

**T**his paper examines the relationship of career guidance and orientation to technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Section 2 examines the concept of career guidance and orientation, and defines its three main elements as being career information, career counselling and career education; it also defines 'career' in a broad and inclusive way, and suggests that the relevance of career guidance to TVET has been under-explored. Section 3 examines the policy rationale for attention to career guidance in general and in relation to TVET in particular, and suggests that it is relevant to some of the key policy issues in TVET, including moving to a demand-driven approach, enhancing its prominence and status, and relating it to occupational flexibility. Section 4 analyses the main conceptual elements of career guidance provision, including the growing role played by technology. Section 5 examines the main forms of current career guidance services – within educational institutions, within workplaces, and in the community – and the potential for developing national lifelong career guidance systems. Section 6 reviews current career guidance practices in relation to TVET, both pre-entry and within TVET programmes. Section 7 offers some brief reflections on impact evidence. Finally, Section 8 draws some conclusions, and comments on the role of UNESCO in supporting the development of career guidance in relation to TVET.

## **2 The concept of career guidance and orientation**

**C**areer guidance and orientation services have been defined both by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004, p.19) and in a World Bank report (Watts and Fretwell, 2004, p.2) as:

Services intended to assist individuals, of any age and any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

They include three main elements:

- Career information, covering information on courses, occupations and career paths. This includes labour market information. It may be provided in print form, but increasingly is web-based in nature.
- Career counselling, conducted on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, in which attention is focused on the distinctive career issues faced by individuals.
- Career education, as part of the educational curriculum, in which attention is paid to helping groups of individuals to develop the competences for managing their career development.

The term 'career guidance' is sometimes used to cover all of these; sometimes to cover the first two, which is one of the reasons for the term 'orientation' being added to the title of this paper (the other, less strictly defensible reason is that orientation is the French word for 'guidance').

The concept of career guidance needs to be distinguished clearly from two related but basically different processes: selection (making decisions about individuals) and promotion (attempting to persuade individuals to choose particular opportunities at the expense of others), both of which are primarily designed to meet the needs of opportunity providers (education and training institutions, and employers). Career guidance, by contrast, is concerned with helping individuals to choose between the full range of available opportunities, in relation to their distinctive abilities, interests and values.

In the past, a distinction has often been drawn between 'educational guidance', concerned with course choices, and 'vocational guidance', concerned with occupational choices. This was based on the view that educational choices preceded, or should be separated from, vocational choices. Such a view is now widely regarded as outdated. Changes in the world of work mean that more people now make several changes of career direction in the course of their lives, and have to learn new competences in order to do so. Increasingly therefore, learning and work are

intertwined, on a lifelong basis. Careers are commonly not 'chosen' at a single point in time, but 'constructed' through a series of interrelated learning and work choices made throughout life. This has led to a new paradigm in career guidance, designed to support lifelong career development (see Section 4).

The use of the term 'career' may be taken to imply that the relevance of such processes is confined mainly to relatively advantaged groups in high-income countries. This would be the case if 'career' was defined in its traditional sense, as progression up an ordered hierarchy in an occupation or profession. Increasingly, however, it is being defined in a much more inclusive way as the individual's lifelong progression in learning and in work (Watts, 1999). Such a definition is in principle applicable to all, in low- and middle-income as well as high-income countries, particularly if it is extended to cover informal as well as formal learning and work. It is in this sense that the term is used in this paper.

The policy significance attached to career guidance has been significantly elevated in the last decade through a series of linked policy reviews carried out by a variety of international organizations including the OECD (2004), the World Bank (Watts and Fretwell, 2004) and the European Commission and its agencies (Sultana, 2003, 2004; Sultana and Watts, 2006, 2007; Sweet, 2007; Zelloth, 2009). These have included systematic reviews covering fifty-five countries (for an overview, see Watts, 2008), and have been the basis for two policy manuals: one addressed mainly to high-income countries (OECD and EC, 2004); the other to middle- and low-income countries (ILO, 2006). The reviews were used by UNESCO as the basis for a review of career guidance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) (Sultana, 2008). The present paper draws heavily on these reviews.

## **2.1 Relationship and relevance to TVET**

The specific relevance of career guidance and orientation services to TVET was given some attention in the reviews outlined above, but has tended in general to be under-explored. Although UNESCO's Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (UNESCO, 2001) included a section on guidance, a collection of papers published by UNESCO on guidance and counselling in relation to TVET

(Hiebert and Borgen, 2002) was mainly general in nature, and made little mention of the distinctive issues related to career guidance within TVET itself. Much the same was true of the section on guidance in a report by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) (2009a) on vocational education and training (VET) in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

There has been a tendency to take the view that career guidance is largely irrelevant within TVET, on the grounds that entry to a vocational course implies that a career decision has already been made. But in the context of the changes in the world of work outlined in the preceding section, such a view is increasingly open to question. It has accordingly been strongly challenged in a recent OECD review of VET, where it is argued that career guidance is relevant to two of the key policy issues relating to the development of VET (Watts, 2009; OECD, 2010):

- Moving from a supply-driven to a demand-driven approach; and
- Addressing the relationship between TVET and occupational flexibility.

This paper attempts to build on this analysis and extend it to the wider range of countries represented in UNESCO. The two issues in question are discussed in Section 3.2.

The relationship of career guidance and orientation to TVET has been obfuscated by semantic confusions. This applies particularly to career education. Whereas the term 'careers education' in the United Kingdom focuses essentially on career decision-making, 'career education' in the United States of America (USA) has in the past extended this to include the development of specific vocational skills and of work habits and attitudes necessary for entering and keeping a job (Watts and Herr, 1976). More recently, the term commonly used in the USA to describe VET has been 'career and technical education', to reflect an orientation towards a career rather than a single occupation (OECD, 2010).

Conversely, the UNESCO Revised Recommendation (UNESCO, 2001) defined 'technical and vocational education' to include not only specific preparation for a particular occupation field but also more general preparation for the world of work as 'part of everyone's general education', including developing 'capacities for decision making'

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<sup>1</sup> TVET and VET are used broadly synonymously in this paper, in line with the usage in documents cited.

(pp. 7, 10) which can be interpreted as effectively subsuming career education within it. If however TVET is defined more narrowly, along the lines of the OECD definition of VET as 'education and training programmes designed for, and typically leading to, a particular job or type of job' (OECD, 2010, p. 26), and if career education is defined in the terms offered above, then it becomes more practicable and more fruitful to explore the relationship between the two.

TVET includes both education-based technical and vocational programmes (in schools, colleges and universities) and work-based learning programmes (including apprenticeships). It is worth noting that the changes that have taken place in the concept of career guidance, outlined at the start of this section, have been paralleled by similar changes in relation to the concept of TVET. It too has been viewed as a device to 'smooth the [initial] transition from education to employment' (UNESCO, 2011, p. 62), but is now increasingly conceived on an iterative lifelong basis, linked to the changes in the world of work. Thus while this paper at times refers specifically to the relationship of career guidance and orientation to TVET for young people, much of the discussion applies to adults as well.

## 3 Policy rationale

### 3.1 Policy rationale for career guidance and orientation in general

Career guidance and orientation is widely viewed as a public good as well as a private good. In other words, its benefits potentially accrue not only to the individual recipient of the services but also to the wider society. The policy rationales for attention to career guidance and orientation as a public good were defined by OECD (2004) as being threefold:

- Learning goals, including improving the efficiency of the education and training system and managing its interface with the labour market. If individuals make decisions about what they are to learn in a well-informed and well thought-

through way, linked to their interests, their capacities and their aspirations, investments in education and training systems are likely to yield higher returns.

- Labour market goals, including improving the match between supply and demand and managing adjustments to change. If people find jobs that use their potential and meet their own goals, they are likely to be more motivated and therefore more productive.
- Social equity goals, including supporting equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion. Career guidance services can raise the aspirations of disadvantaged groups and support them in gaining access to opportunities that might otherwise have been denied to them. (Informal guidance, by contrast, tends to reinforce existing social inequities.)

Box 1 lists some goals in each of these categories, as identified in a study of career guidance and orientation services in seven middle-income countries (Chile, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa and Turkey) carried out for the World Bank. Underpinning the rationale for investment in career guidance and orientation services is the notion that addressing such objectives through structural and institutional reforms is not sufficient. To lubricate and complement such reforms, attention also needs to be given to supporting the processes of individual decision-making through which they can be made effective. This is linked to the notion that national strategies for lifelong learning and human resource development need to be driven not only by governments and employers but also by individuals themselves (see e.g. EC, 2010).

*Box 1. Some policy goals for career guidance and orientation services*

Learning goals

- Supporting lifelong learning (for both youth and adults) and the development of human resources to support national and individual economic growth.
- Supporting a more flexible education and training system.

- Supporting a stronger but more flexible vocational orientation within the school system.
- Improving the efficiency of education and training systems by reducing dropout rates and increasing graduation rates.
- Strengthening linkages between education/training systems and the labour market.

#### Labour market goals

- Improving labour market efficiency.
- Reducing mismatch between supply and demand.
- Addressing skill shortages.
- Improving labour adaptability in response to market conditions, in terms of both geographical and occupational mobility.
- Reducing the extent and duration of unemployment.
- Minimizing individual dependency on income-support systems, as these are introduced.

#### Social equity goals

- Supporting equal opportunities in relation to education and employment.
- Addressing the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups.
- Supporting the social integration of ethnic minorities.
- Supporting female labour market participation.
- Addressing gender segmentation in the labour market.

Source: Watts and Fretwell (2004, pp. 6–7).

Some of the goals in Box 1 are addressed to particular target groups. Young people are often targeted, to support their initial transitions into the labour market. Particular attention may also be given to groups of the disadvantaged (in terms of social class,

gender or ethnicity) and to those who have dropped out of education, training or employment. In relation to adults, priority may be given to unemployed people or to other groups seeking to re-enter the labour market – migrants and refugees, for example, or women returning after child-rearing, or demobilized soldiers in post-conflict situations.

In general, in terms of international variations, career guidance services tend to be more highly developed, and given greater policy priority, in high-income than in middle- and low-income countries. The more formalized and more developed the economy, and the more opportunities it offers for social and geographical mobility, the more need there is for informal mechanisms for allocation of work roles to be supplemented by formal mechanisms, including career guidance services. But middle-income countries also face increasing challenges in these respects, to which investment in career guidance services may be seen as a response, as the World Bank study demonstrated. This is particularly the case in countries like some of those in the Mediterranean region, with high rates of growth being fuelled by structural reforms including economic liberalization, growth of international trade and foreign investment (Sweet, 2009; Sultana and Watts, 2007). In addition, the growth of career guidance services is related to the development of market economies and democratic political institutions, with their greater attention to individual volition, and so may be particularly relevant to countries in transition in these directions (Watts, 1996; Watts and Fretwell, 2004).

## **3.2 Policy rationale for career guidance and orientation in relation to TVET**

Most of the goals mentioned in Section 3.1 are relevant to TVET. But the role of career guidance and orientation in strengthening the role of individuals in driving national strategies is of particular significance, supporting moves to make TVET more responsive and demand-driven.

The case for TVET is based on preparing learners for employment, thereby meeting labour market demand. But Grubb notes 'the persistent fear ... that VET programs will lose contact with employers, that VET will be "supply-driven" or dominated by

the concerns of VET providers, rather than 'demand-driven' or dominated by the needs of employers' (2008, p. 30). In seeking closer articulation with labour markets, attention may accordingly be paid to planning approaches based on consultation with employers; but this is rarely effective in itself (OECD, 2010). It therefore tends to be replaced, or at least supplemented, by an approach based on responsiveness to learner preferences. The rationale for this offered by OECD (2010, pp.51–2) is threefold:

- 'Students are often good judges of their own skills and the characteristics that may make them better suited to one job than another – so taking account of their preferences leads to higher productivity.'
- 'Students know more about what they most enjoy doing, so that even when labour market outcomes are weaker, they are compensated in terms of their well-being.'
- 'It is counterproductive to coerce students into careers they do not want – the very high proportion of VET graduates in nearly all countries who change occupations after only a few years probably reflects some welcome career development, but it may also be the result of some misconceived career choices.'

In addition, Grubb (2008) notes that learners will want to read the labour market and to enter programmes with the best prospects of getting them into desirable employment in both the short and long term.

There is thus a strong policy case for effective career choices to assure the quality of these processes, by ensuring that learners' decision-making is well informed – in terms of both self-awareness and opportunity awareness – and well thought through. In these terms, career guidance and orientation acts as a further bridge between TVET programmes and the world of work, with the learner as an active agent in strengthening this relationship.

Investment in career guidance may also in some cases be justified as a means of increasing interest in TVET as opposed to general education. This emerged as an issue, for example, in the UNESCO review of career guidance in the OPT (see Box 2), where a key driver for the policy interest in career guidance was as a tool for directing more students towards vocational tracks, including female students in particular.

The review noted the need to keep 'a balance between directing/orienting on the one hand, and supporting personal decisions on the other'. Other policies were also needed to raise the profile and attractiveness of TVET (Sultana, 2008) – which career counselling could then 'lubricate' impartially at the level of personal decision-making.

### *Box 2. Career guidance in the OPT*

A review of career guidance in the OPT was conducted for UNESCO by Professor Ronald G. Sultana (2008). Subtitled Mapping the Field and Ways Forward, it was based on a one-week study visit. The report aimed to map and examine current initiatives in the career guidance field in the OPT, to place them in the context of international initiatives in this field, and to explore ways to establish a career guidance system in the OPT. The report took careful account of the particular political and economic situation of the OPT, its damaging impact on the business and investment climate, and the limited employment opportunities available to Palestinians, which made any notion of 'occupational choice' seem a luxury.

Despite these problems, a number of noteworthy career guidance initiatives were identified, in relation to career information, career education, career counselling, employment counselling and job placement. Several of these were in the non-governmental sector. Examples included the 'Step Forward' programme of the Sharek Youth Forum, which included career counselling, educational guidance, interactive training workshops on writing curricula vitae and job-interview skills, on-the-job training opportunities and work experience, work simulation (such as a model court for law students), careers fairs, and training and support in setting up a business.

The report recommended a number of policy options, including the establishment of a National Task Force for Career Guidance.

Career guidance may also be linked to efforts to enhance the status of TVET by viewing it as a positive option rather than as a residual destination for those who have failed in general education. In some countries, in the Mediterranean region

for example, the education system has often been based on rigid tracking based on examination results, with less successful students being guided into TVET in order to limit student flows into higher education (Perez and Hakim, 2006). In seeking to open up such systems, and for instance to make it possible for students to move from vocational streams into higher education, the greater attention to student choice requires career guidance support.

The other major specific policy rationale for career guidance in relation to TVET is to support the relationship between TVET and occupational flexibility. The UNESCO Revised Recommendation stated that TVET should 'lead to the acquisition of broad knowledge and generic skills applicable to a number of occupations within a given field so that the individual is not limited in his/her choice of occupation and is able to transfer from one field to another during his/her working life' (UNESCO, 2001, p. 21). The effectiveness of attention to generic transferable skills is likely to be more effective if TVET programmes include career education components that give explicit attention to other occupations to which the skills and competences being acquired within the programme are transferable, so making the concept of transfer more transparent and tangible (Watts, 2009).

Such occupational flexibility can also be enhanced by national qualification frameworks (Bjørnåvold and Coles, 2008; Young, 2007). These are designed to relate qualifications in different sectors to one another, developing linkages and pathways with portable credits that allow students to move more flexibly from one sector of education and training to another. Such frameworks are being developed in around 100 countries (Bjørnåvold and Deij, 2009), including for example almost all countries of the South African Development Community (SADC) region (SADC and UNESCO, 2011). In South Africa, the South African Qualifications Authority has taken the lead in developing a national strategy for career guidance, on the grounds that learners need navigational support if such frameworks are to be used effectively (Walters et al., 2009) (see Box 3, on page 278).

## 4 Main elements of career guidance and orientation provision

It was suggested in Section 2 that career guidance and orientation services include three main elements: career information, career counselling and career education. To these three terms, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adds 'employment counselling' and 'job placement' (2006, p.1). Such terms are particularly valuable when considering the role of public employment services (PES) in relation to career guidance (e.g. Sultana and Watts, 2006; Borbély-Pecze and Watts, 2011). 'Job placement', however, is usually viewed as being separate from career guidance, while 'employment counselling' can be viewed as part of career counselling, even though it focuses mainly on immediate employment goals.

Closely related to career guidance are a range of other activities. These include tutoring, coaching and mentoring; portfolios and individual learning plans; interests inventories, psychometric tests and other online tools and resources; work experience (when used for exploratory rather than preparatory purposes), work shadowing, work simulations and work visits; taster programmes; and enterprise activities.

Career information is the core of all effective career guidance provision. It needs to include information on occupations, on learning opportunities, and on the relationships and pathways between the two. It also needs to include labour market information, on changing supply and demand in relation to different occupations. In many middle- and low-income countries, however, career information in general, and labour market information in particular, is very limited (see e.g. Sultana and Watts, 2007; Zelloth, 2009).

While information is essential for effective career decision-making, it is not sufficient. As noted by the OECD, 'public investment in information is of little value if its potential users are not able to access the information, to understand it and relate it to their personal needs, and to act upon it' (2004, p. 91). Moreover, as Grubb (2002) points out:

In many respects the choices about schooling, work, and careers are not choices in the same sense that we think of the choices among shirts or fruit or financial services; they are much more difficult issues of identity, involving deeper issues of what a person is, what their values are, how they position themselves with respect to others and to social groups, what they think of as a worthy life – the many different elements defining who they are.

(Grubb, 2002, p.11)

Information therefore needs to be supplemented by other career interventions if it is to be effective.

Traditionally, the dominant model of career guidance provision was based on talent-matching approaches: measuring individual abilities and matching them to the demands of different occupations. This has been challenged on a number of grounds. In particular, it has been argued (see Watts and Fretwell, 2004, p. 24) that:

- The matching process should be concerned not just with individuals' abilities and aptitudes, but also with their needs, values and interests.
- Career guidance should be concerned not only with matching of existing attributes, but also with self-development and growth.
- Emphasis should shift from discrete decisions made at particular points in time to the underlying and continuous process of career development through which individuals determine the course of their lives.
- The aim of career guidance should not be to deploy expertise to make decisions for people, but rather to help people make decisions for themselves.

Accordingly, there has been a shift to a new paradigm, based on three main components:

- Career guidance should be available throughout life, to support lifelong learning and career development.
- It should be viewed as a learning experience, encompassing a range of learning interventions.

- It should foster the individual's autonomy, helping them to develop the skills and knowledge they need in order to manage their career decisions and transitions.

This reflects a move from a psychological to a pedagogical approach: from testing to tasting, with a primary focus on helping individuals to develop their career management skills. At the same time, there is evidence from a Dutch study in vocational education that concrete learning experiences need to be accompanied by opportunities to participate in career-oriented dialogues if students are to develop career competencies effectively (Kuijpers et al., 2011).

A widely adopted framework for defining career management skills is the so-called DOTS model (Law and Watts, 1977), the elements of which are self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision learning and transition learning. More recently, 'blueprints' for defining career management skills on a lifelong basis have been developed in Canada (National Life/Work Centre, n.d.) and Australia (MCETYA, 2009). Work has also been carried out in Europe on exploring critically the nature of such skills (Sultana, 2011).

In reframing career guidance and orientation provision, a key role is being played by information and communication technologies (ICT). These have huge potential for extending access to services and for improving the quality of those services. This includes not only information, but also automated interactions in which users can interrogate the information in relation to their own preferences and characteristics, without additional use of staff time. In addition, the more recent advent of Web 2.0 and 3.0 technologies, including social media and user-generated information, opens up new possibilities, including interactions with 'career informants' (people already in the occupation or course the person is seeking to enter) (Hooley et al., 2010). Many users, however, need help to learn how to find reliable information among the mass of content available (World Bank, 2006, p.17).

Technology is also increasingly being used to enable individuals to communicate with career professionals via the telephone or the web. A particularly innovative and significant initiative of this kind is outlined in Box 3.

*Box 3: A career advice helpline in South Africa*

In South Africa, a career advice helpline is being developed which comprises a multi-channel career development service accessible by various means (including telephone, text messages, email, Twitter and Facebook), linked to a career information and career resources website, media activities (such as a national radio campaign), and linkages with institutions providing career development services, such as community colleges.

The helpline is viewed as a core element of a new comprehensive career guidance system for South Africa. Its development is being led by the South African Qualifications Authority, as a means of activating learner usage of its National Qualifications Framework.

The helpline builds upon experience with similar helplines in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, but its development has also been enriched by drawing upon a tradition of equity-driven community-based career centres established by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the previous apartheid regime. One of its distinctive rationales is the capacity of the mobile telephone to reach out into rural and disadvantaged communities.

*Sources: Flederman (2011), Keevy et al. (2012).*

It is important to recognize that career guidance provision needs to be adapted to the cultural context in which it is set. Cultural issues include the significance of family influences and patronage, and also of attitudes relating to directiveness and fatalism (Sultana and Watts, 2007). Such issues may be influenced by socio-economic factors: for example, in countries without pension and other public benefit systems, families may be significantly dependent on, and therefore expect to have a significant say in, the career choices of their children. Arulmani (2011) has promoted the development of culturally resonant careers programmes in India, and has demonstrated how negative career beliefs can be countered through such interventions.

Career guidance provision may also be influenced by values in other ways. For instance, the concern for sustainable development has induced interest in the

concept of 'green guidance', in which emphasis is placed on encouraging individuals to consider the environmental implications of their career choices (Plant, 1999).

A final issue worth noting is the relationship between career guidance and enterprise. Careers programmes should be concerned not only with employment but also with self-employment and entrepreneurship. There are strong links between these concepts and the notion of career self-management, reflected in the notion that 'my career is my business' (in both senses of the term: it is my source of income, and it is my concern) (Hakim, 1994). Since the informal sector can be viewed as the latent entrepreneurial sector, it also provides a means of extending the concept of career development to cover the informal economies (which in many middle- and low-income countries provide the main source of livelihood for many people).

## 5 Current career guidance and orientation structures

The main organizational structures for delivering career guidance and orientation services have been analysed in detail in the international reviews outlined in Section 2. They can be divided into three main groups:

- Career development provision in educational institutions,
- Career development provision in workplaces,
- Careers services in the community.

Each is here examined in turn, followed by a brief discussion of the potential for developing national lifelong career guidance systems.

## **5.1 Provision in educational institutions**

In educational institutions, there is often some formal provision designed to help students to manage their career-related choices and transitions on entry to, while studying in and on exit from the institution.

In schools, these may include career education programmes that form part of the core curriculum. Such programmes have been established in a number of school systems, particularly in lower secondary schools, though sometimes extending to primary and upper secondary schools too. They may be stand-alone programmes run as a separate course, subsumed within other courses (such as personal, social and health education, or social studies), infused within most or all subjects across the curriculum, or provided as extra-curricular programmes (often on an intensive basis over a day or longer). Some countries include work visits, exploratory work experience and work shadowing alongside or as part of such programmes. All of these programmes tend to be more highly developed in high-income countries.

Career counselling tends in many countries – including many middle-income countries (Watts and Fretwell, 2004; Sultana and Watts, 2007; Sweet, 2007) – to be provided as part of a broader role of guidance/school counsellor (or school psychologist/pedagogue). This role also covers guidance on pupils' learning and behavioural problems, and on the personal and social problems to which these may be linked. The counsellor may or may not have also been trained as a teacher, and may or may not also do some teaching. In the World Bank study of middle-income countries, counsellor–pupil ratios ranged between 1:300 and 1:800 (Watts and Fretwell, 2004, p. 9). Within such roles, there is consistent evidence that career guidance tends to be marginalized, in two respects:

- Guidance counsellors tend to spend much of their time on the learning and behavioural problems of a minority of pupils, at the expense of the help needed by all pupils in relation to their educational and vocational choices.
- Guidance on such choices tends to focus mainly on immediate educational decisions, rather than on occupational decisions and on longer-term career implications.

In some cases, these problems may be exacerbated by using guidance counsellors to carry out administrative tasks which have nothing to do with their guidance role, and may indeed (in the case of disciplinary tasks) be in conflict with it (Watts and Fretwell, 2004, p. 9).

Accordingly, some countries have made separate appointments of career counsellors or careers teachers. An alternative model is for such career counsellors to be based in an agency outside the school, closer to the labour market, and independent of the interests of the educational institution (which in some cases may tend to bias the guidance, for example by favouring the school's own learning provision over alternative provision). The German model, in which the PES plays such a role, has been influential in some other countries.

Alongside such specialists, teachers may also play a guidance role, in particular by adopting an additional role as tutors or homeroom teachers. This may include some curriculum time, which can be used for guidance as well as administrative purposes.

In tertiary education institutions, specialist careers services are well-established in such countries as Australia, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the USA, and are growing in some other countries. They may include job-placement services (which school services usually do not), and are sometimes part of more broad-based counselling services or student services. In addition, there has recently been a growth of career education in higher education institutions, in the form of career development modules and the like (e.g. Kumar, 2007; Watts, 2006).

Some countries have also developed what are effectively career education courses in adult education. In addition, career guidance elements may be included in access courses for those returning to formal education after a substantial gap, and in processes for the assessment and recognition of prior learning.

## 5.2 Provision in workplaces

In some high-income countries, employees commonly look to their employer for some forms of career guidance, especially related to learning new skills and to career development within the organization (see e.g. MORI, 2001). Some employers provide systematic career development provision for their employees, but this tends

to be confined mainly to larger employers in high-income countries (including multinational companies), and to key talent groups such as graduates and managers (CEDEFOP, 2008a). In a number of countries too, trade unions have become involved in schemes designed to support the skills development of their members (Clough, 2009).

Also common in larger companies in high-income countries is outplacement provision for employees who are being made redundant. These services are usually purchased by the company from external career guidance providers (see Section 5.3).

Public policy can support career development provision in workplaces, either by including it as allowable expenditure against training levies, or through voluntary quality-mark schemes (OECD, 2004).

### **5.3 Provision in the community**

The strength of provision being embedded in educational institutions and workplaces is that these are the sites where many individuals are located for substantial parts of their lives, and where their careers are significantly forged. But these institutions may have an interest in influencing their career directions, which can jeopardize the impartiality of the guidance that is offered. This is even more the case in workplaces, in relation to consideration of options outside the organization for individuals whom the employer wants to retain. Moreover, many individuals are not located in either educational institutions or workplaces – for example, those who are unemployed.

For all of these reasons, a range of career guidance provision is located elsewhere in the community. Some is in the public sector, some in the voluntary and community sector, and some in the private sector.

In the public sector, the main such provision is offered by PES. As noted in Section 4, such provision tends to focus mainly on employment counselling and on immediate employment goals, and to be linked to job placement. In countries with unemployment benefit systems, this type of provision tends to be linked to sanctions related to claiming unemployment benefits (in other words, people only retain the right to claim such benefits if they attend employment counselling sessions and carry out agreed action plans) and to gatekeeping roles in relation to training or

other provision supported out of public funds. In middle- and low-income countries without such systems, the unemployed may have little if any incentive to use the services.

Some PES, however, also provide career counselling which focuses on longer-term career goals and is more client-centred in nature. This may be offered to some unemployed individuals and job-seekers; it may also be offered to students and to employed individuals, or to individuals thinking of returning to the labour market. In addition, PES may play a significant role in the collection and dissemination of career and labour market information (Sultana and Watts, 2006; Borbély-Pecze and Watts, 2011).

In a small number of high-income countries, separate all-age careers services have been established, notably in New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. Such services offer coherence and continuity of provision, with related cost savings and added value. They can also provide a professional spine for a national lifelong career guidance system (see Section 5.4), which includes supporting capacity-building of guidance provision in educational institutions and other sectors (Watts, 2010).

Career guidance provision in the voluntary and community sector is much stronger in some countries than in others. In some cases, its role has been stimulated by the contracting out of some public employment services to these kinds of organization (Considine, 2001; OECD, 2004). Voluntary and community organizations can also play a particularly important role in relation to disadvantaged groups returning to education and training (Hawthorn and Alloway, 2009). In Sultana's (2008) review of services in the OPT (see Box 2), he noted that NGOs had been at the forefront of innovation and service provision, and were often more grassroots-based than governmental services and closer to the communities in which they operated. Some external donor organizations accordingly prefer to work through such organizations, especially where relevant government agencies are not well developed (ILO, 2006, p. 45). It is also noteworthy that the new career helpline in South Africa draws upon a tradition of equity-driven community-based career centres established by NGOs under the previous apartheid regime (see Box 3).

Finally, career guidance provision in the private sector tends to be confined to certain niche areas. Only a limited number of career counselling services are funded entirely

through fees paid by individuals, even in high-income countries. There is a stronger market where such services are paid for by employers (notably for outplacement services) or by government contracts. There are also markets in many higher-income countries in career information and in employment agencies, much of it based not on 'user pays' but on 'opportunity provider pays' models. Some web-based employment services, for example, include career information and advice as a 'hook' to attract customers. However, this raises questions about the comprehensiveness and impartiality of such information from a user perspective (Hooley, Hutchinson and Watts, 2011).

Although career guidance is a public good, this does not mean that all such provision should be paid for by governments. Possible public-policy roles in relation to the market in career guidance provision include to stimulate the growth of the market, to quality-assure the market, and to compensate for market failure (OECD, 2004).

## **5.4 National lifelong career guidance systems**

The international studies outlined in Section 2 have not only reviewed the range of career guidance provision on a lifelong basis, but have examined tools and structures designed to coordinate such provision more strongly, making it more seamless to the citizen. In Europe, most countries have now developed national lifelong guidance forums or other coordination mechanisms, designed to bring together the relevant government departments, social partners and other stakeholders, in order to achieve improved communication, cooperation and coordination. Tasks might include the development of cross-sectoral protocols and quality standards (CEDEFOP, 2008b; ELGPN, 2010). Hungary provides a particularly systematic example (Watts and Borbély-Peczé, 2011). More limited coordination mechanisms have been developed in some other middle-income countries (see e.g. Sultana and Watts, 2007, p. 47; Zelloth, 2009, p. 47).

## 6 Current career guidance and orientation practices in relation to TVET

Career guidance and orientation is relevant to the quality and effectiveness of TVET programmes at two stages: prior to entering a TVET programme, and within the TVET programme.

Prior to entry, two principles are important (Watts, 2009):

- That all young people should be made aware, within their career education programmes, of TVET options alongside the other options available to them,
- That young people interested in TVET options should have access to career counselling, supported by high-quality career information, to ensure that their choices are well informed and well thought through.

In relation to pre-entry guidance, there is evidence in a number of countries of bias in favour of general education options at the expense of TVET options. This is particularly the case where career advice is provided by academically trained teachers with limited knowledge of the wider world of work. This problem may be exacerbated where institutions have an interest in encouraging students to enter courses at their own institution rather than those offered elsewhere, especially where school funding is linked to student recruitment (OECD, 2010). This is one of the rationales for providing career guidance to school students from an external service (see Section 5.1). It is also a rationale for improving the professionalization of career guidance practitioners: moves in this direction are taking place in a range of countries (CEDEFOP, 2009b). Such moves are supported by concern that career guidance should be a separate profession rather than being assimilated into psychological counselling, and that the list of competences required should pay more attention than in the recent past to knowledge of labour and learning markets (OECD, 2010).

It is also important that career education and career counselling should be supported by relevant career information. In relation to TVET, such provision needs to include information on (Watts, 2009):

- The available TVET options;
- The qualifications to which they lead, and the further qualifications to which they give access;
- The occupations to which these qualifications provide access, and the extent to which the qualifications are sufficient for entry;
- The salary/wage levels offered by these occupations;
- The projected demand for these occupations (a strong exemplar here is the Occupational Outlook Handbook published by the Department of Labor in the USA);
- The labour market outcomes achieved by those successfully completing the programmes, including the nature of their jobs, their salary/wage levels, whether or not the jobs are in an occupational sector directly related to their TVET programme, and the extent to which they are using the skills and competences acquired in the programme.

However, as noted in Section 4, career information in general, and labour market information in particular, is very limited in some countries. Even simple destinations data from TVET courses are often missing (e.g. SADC and UNESCO, 2011). Addressing these gaps is a priority in such countries if access to TVET is to be adequately supported.

Such information may be supported by other programmes designed to improve awareness of TVET options. In Turkey, for example, vocational and technical education fairs have been organized annually in all cities to demonstrate the advances made in this sector and to make it more widely known; regulations have insisted that all eighth-grade students in the city should be scheduled to visit the relevant fair in groups, as part of a wider programme to orient them to TVET and its relationship to employment opportunities (Watts and Fretwell, 2004, p.12). Similar activities are organized in Algeria and Morocco, where websites clearly setting out the TVET offer have been put online, and guidebooks, posters, promotional videos and open days support the attempts to attract more students to the TVET sector (Sultana and Watts, 2007, p. 35).

In TVET programmes, the key principles are:

- That career guidance should be available at all relevant decision points, and on exit,
- That career education programmes have an important role to play both in preparing students for future career decisions and in supporting the transferability of their learning.

Both need to be built as core strategies into curriculum design (Watts, 2009).

Some TVET programmes adopt structures of progressive specialization, which mean that further decisions carrying career consequences need to be made after entering the programme. In Egypt, for example, a new study plan for technical education introduced in 2008/09 aimed to postpone specialization to the second year, with only a family of occupations selected in the first year, thus creating the potential for orientation programmes and other guidance activities (Zelloth, 2009, p.15).

In addition, some countries have been introducing structural changes to improve progression pathways between TVET and higher education. A study in Australia, however, indicated that progress in improving such pathways had not been accompanied by corresponding progress in the provision of career support to facilitate these pathways (Harris et al., 2006).

More broadly, career education elements in TVET programmes need to pay attention to career paths in the occupations to which the programme is designed to lead. This should include, for example, opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, as noted in Section 3.2, the elements should give some attention to other occupations to which the competences acquired in the programme might be transferable. This can include experience-based elements, such as additional work placements in other sectors, in order to demonstrate their transferability in action.

It is also important for career guidance and placement services to be available towards the end of courses, to help students to review their plans: in Hungary, for instance, over a quarter of vocational secondary students and over a third of vocational training students indicated that they would choose a different occupation if they

could start again (Kis et al., 2008, p. 26). In addition, help needs to be available earlier in courses for any students who are thinking of, or at risk of, dropping out, to ensure that they are able to transfer as easily as possible to an alternative programme.

In general, though, career guidance tends to be weaker and more often absent in vocational than in general education programmes. In Australia, for example, a review of career development services in post-secondary institutions concluded that students in technical and further education (TAFE) had fewer opportunities than those in universities to benefit from career guidance in their institutions. Whereas almost all universities had dedicated career services units with an institution-wide responsibility for providing career services to students, such services in the TAFE sector were more likely to be provided as part of general student services such as student counselling (PhillipsKPA, 2008). The inclusion of career services in generic counselling services or integrated student services is also evident in post-secondary vocational institutions in other countries: in Germany, for instance (OECD, 2002). In such instances, career guidance tends to be viewed as a reactive remedial service for students with problems, rather than as a proactive core support for all students.

A possible rationale for the reduced attention to career guidance in vocational institutions compared with general education institutions is that attention to career pathways related to particular vocational courses is embedded in the courses themselves, and in the arrangements made for work-experience placements, for tutorial support, and for making use of the experiences and contacts of staff (especially, in some cases, part-time staff) in the relevant occupational sector. Three issues need to be raised in relation to such provision:

- Whether it introduces students to the full range of opportunities in the sector,
- Whether it covers career pathways in the sector rather being confined to entry-level jobs,
- Whether it covers the needs of students who might be interested in changing career direction (including making them aware of other occupational sectors to which some of the competences they have acquired might be transferable).

It is also important to identify whether such provision is subject to systematic institutional policy and quality standards, or is left to individual course teams to determine.

In middle- and low-income countries, career guidance in TVET institutions tends to be even more limited, and is often restricted to informal help offered by individual teachers/trainers (Sultana and Watts, 2007, p. 35). There are nonetheless examples of relevant initiatives. Zelloth (2009, pp.31–32), for example, reported that in Macedonia, careers centres had been established in all vocational schools, as part of an international donor programme; and that in Georgia, careers managers and consultants were to be introduced in all newly established VET centres.

## 7 Impact evidence

**T**he OECD Career Guidance Policy Review (2004) concluded that there was a great deal of positive evidence of the impact of career guidance interventions on learning outcomes in relation to career management skills and related motivational and attitudinal outcomes; that there was some evidence of positive effects in relation to such behavioural outcomes as participation in learning programmes, and learner attainment; but that the available evidence on long-term outcomes (such as social mobility) was limited, mainly because of the costs and technical difficulties involved in mounting relevant studies. More recent reviews (e.g. Hooley, Marriott and Sampson, 2011) support this broad conclusion.

In terms of the relative impact of different career guidance interventions, meta-analyses (notably Whiston et al., 1998; Whiston et al., 2003) indicate that if the aim is to provide the greatest gain in the shortest amount of time for the client, individual counselling is much the most effective intervention, followed by computer interventions, with group counselling, workshops and class-based interventions some way behind. But if the criterion is the greatest gain for the greatest number of clients per unit of counsellor resource, the most cost-effective is computer-based

interventions, followed by class-based interventions and workshops. Counsellor-free interventions are less effective than interventions involving a counsellor; computer interventions supplemented by counselling are more effective than computer interventions on their own.

## 8 Conclusion

This paper indicates that career guidance and orientation is strongly relevant to TVET programmes, but that its relationship to such programmes has been under-explored and is still weakly developed in many countries, especially middle- and low-income countries. There are signs that this may now be beginning to change, not least because career guidance and orientation is beginning to be recognized as a significant means of making TVET more responsive and demand-driven, and addressing its relationship to occupational flexibility. It is critically important prior to entry to TVET programmes, to ensure that TVET options are considered by a wider range of learners, and that learners' decisions related to them are well informed and well thought through. It is also important during and on exit from such programmes, to support individuals' sense of direction and the transferability of their learning. More attention needs to be given to the policy implications of these issues, and to evaluating what can be learned from current and innovative practices. Such evaluations should include impact evidence.

UNESCO could play a significant role in strengthening the role of career guidance in relation to TVET, through its research and other catalytic activities. Its recent review in the OPT (Sultana, 2008) is a good example of what is possible. In doing so, it would be helpful and cost-effective to build upon the international studies that have been conducted in recent years through the OECD, the World Bank, and the European Commission and its agencies (see Section 2). Regions that merit particular attention include Central and Southern Africa, and Central and South America (the only countries in these regions covered in the reviews to date are South Africa and Chile respectively).

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