



International  
Labour  
Organization

# ▶ A review of national career development support systems

Armenia, Moldova, Panama and Viet Nam



▶ **A review of national career development support systems**

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## ► Executive summary

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Among international organisations there is a consensus that career guidance and career development have an essential role in meeting the changing character of skills demand for skills in labour markets around the world. As part of the recovery, career guidance and career development can enhance re-employment and longer-term labour market engagement by supporting individuals in their efforts to retrain, find new jobs or develop new businesses. ILO (2020) recommends that targeted labour market interventions and broader access to PES are critical to maintain the employability and job-readiness of most vulnerable groups. Lifelong learning and labour market participation can also be encouraged with inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches.

Ultimately, such investments in career development provide positive economic, educational and social returns to both individuals and society.

As career development in most countries is a responsibility of more than one government agency or policy domain, comprehensive national reviews are an important mechanism to provide a comprehensive overview of key system features, existing strengths, and priorities for further action. As a participatory process, national reviews provide opportunities to bring together the key stakeholders to initiate a process of policy enhancement which can be adapted to national contexts and conditions, including low-income countries.

This report presents a rationale and a model for country reviews of career development support systems. The features of the review model reflect a Theory of Change approach, with focus on five key elements that reflect a comprehensive national career development system: coordination, funding, quality, access, and the use of technology. Based on four country reviews (Armenia, Moldova, Panama, and Viet Nam) the report introduces examples of national career development practices and policies in accordance with the review model key features, remaining challenges and recommendations for further actions. The report illustrates the added value of ongoing national review processes and how they are already contributing to system and policy development.

Whilst the organisation of career development support varies in each of the four reviewed countries because of societal, economic, and political contexts, there are several emerging practices for integrating career education in education and training, and widening access to services through broader engagement of social partners or community organisations. The importance and utility of career development is generally acknowledged, but common challenges relate to a lack of accurate labour market information, fragmented services and limited service continuity from a lifelong learning perspective. Demand for career development services continues to exceed supply, and there are persistent inequalities in access to quality services between urban and rural areas. The potential of technology is also constrained by fragmented coverage, cost of equipment and the limited ICT skills of citizens and career practitioners.

The four countries reviewed are in different stages of developing their career development support systems, and ongoing progress has also been frustrated by the lack of a coherent plan and robust evidence of outputs, outcomes, and impact of the services.

Each of the country reviews conducted for this study developed an action plan to enhance the national career development support systems. The report also makes general recommendations based on findings from the four reviews, similar national evaluations from the literature and the G20 Training Strategy for skills development and employment.

Changes in the world of work call for career development support systems to keep abreast of emerging changes taking place in society. As such it is necessary to widen the focus from individuals as beneficiaries to broader community development and employ a stronger systemic approach to transforming national career development systems and connecting them with employment, lifelong learning and skills strategies. It is recommended that countries:

### Delivery of career development services

- ▶ Develop a framework that outlines the career management skills individuals need to effectively manage their learning and work-choices in a lifelong learning perspective.
- ▶ Integrate career education and acquisition of career management skills in formal education and training.
- ▶ Link career development to skills governance, to individual and enterprise learning investments in cooperation with social partners.

### Coordination and cooperation

- ▶ Set out citizens' entitlement for career development in education or employment legislation.
- ▶ Promote efficient investments in public-private partnerships in career development services and products.
- ▶ Examine options for representative structures cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination with stakeholder involvement.

### Funding

- ▶ Allocate stable budget for career development systems on basis of appropriate accountability
- ▶ Encourage enterprises participate in the funding of career development via contribution to employment and training funds.

### Quality assurance

- ▶ Allocate stable budget to a sustainable entity or consultative body responsible for quality assurance of career development services across sectors.
- ▶ Establish national core and specialist competences of career practitioners.

### Access

- ▶ Establish a seamless model of career services for all age groups in coordination and collaboration between service providers.
- ▶ Provide more equal opportunities for people of all ages through multi-channeled career development services.
- ▶ Establish outreach initiatives to reach out rural populations and vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Make career services more available in workplaces in cooperation with public and private service providers.

### Use of technology

- ▶ Ensure a common vision, leadership and strategic path for the implementation of new technologies in career development among stakeholders.
- ▶ Utilize real time labour market information and forecasts to support individuals, education and training providers and career development services.
- ▶ Enhance the digital skills of individuals and those engaged in career development work.

Many countries are in the process of constructing or redefining their national career development support systems, often as a result of technical assistance provided by development partners. The International Labour Organisation and European Training foundation have proposed to continue international cooperation in conducting further national reviews on career development practices and policies and to initiate a process which can be adapted to any context, including low and middle income countries (ILO/ETF, 2021). The review process aims to promote a socially just framework that encourages and empowers approach based on shared social responsibilities rather than allocating the full responsibility for the individuals. The long-term goal is to rethink and strengthen links between career development, lifelong learning and employment and to better ensure quality education outcomes, economic outcomes, and social outcomes.

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## ► Foreword

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Career development support is a central ongoing concern of the ILO, with a first international labour standard being dedicated to it as early as 1948, the Employment Service Convention (No. C88), followed by the Vocational Guidance Recommendation (No. R87), the following year. Through a process of decades of incorporating policy, practice and research results, the ILO has consolidated its views of career development support as a key component of lifelong learning systems and an important enabler of access to decent work and secure livelihoods, as portrayed in the 2004 Human Resources Development Recommendation (R 195).

This publication looks into current challenges and responses to career development support systems, based on the first set of national career development reviews undertaken using the methodology developed by the ILO and the European Training Foundation. The reviews represent a step forward in this area, enhancing cooperation between government, social partners and communities of practice in career development.

In the current situation, at the date of publication, when countries globally are gearing up for economic recovery, career development support has become more important than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic created ruptures in the labour market, in value chains and intensified pre-existing challenges linked to digitalisation and demographic transformation. Workers in all countries are being forced to re-skill in a massive scale to be redeployed, move jobs and sectors and assume new, more complex professional roles. Career guidance has become a key response to empower workers to make informed choices and navigate a growingly complex training offer, brought forth by digitalisation.

Women and young people have been disproportionately affected by the crisis and must face increased barriers to access decent work. Transitions into formality and from education to work must be supported by appropriate knowledge about where present and future jobs lie and how to make the best of existing training offer and training incentives. For young people in particular, early investments in developing career management skills can be done through establishment of career education in schools and initial training. In enterprises, ensuring investment in skills development that increases productivity and sustainability, while securing equal opportunities for workers to access upwards career ladders, also depends on appropriate career management practices.

This report highlights the value of producing critical knowledge about existing gaps and potential, as a basis to prioritise strategic investments in national system development. It also takes stock of recommendations linked to the development of services for diverse publics, resulting from current and previous international reviews.

I trust that this report will further raise the awareness about the critical issues linked to development of career development systems and motivate key stakeholders to engage in strategic cooperation in this area with the support of the ILO.

**Srinivas B. Reddy**

Chief, Skills and Employability Branch, ILO



# 1. Introduction

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The growth of new forms of work, such as 'platform economy' has created flexible relationships between employers and employees, and between service providers and users. At the same time, technological developments, digitalisation including artificial intelligence, force people change jobs more frequently. This implies new types of non-standard forms of work and non-linear careers among individuals entering to the labour market. As work has become increasingly intense, more flexible education and training systems for upskilling and reskilling will be needed to meet the evolving skills needs (e.g. Payton, 2017; Kato, Galán-Muros & Weko, 2020). ILO (2020) recommends that targeted labour market interventions and broader access to PES are critical to maintain the employability and job-readiness of most vulnerable groups. Labour market participation can also be encouraged with inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches.

Now many countries are working intensively to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and developing programmes and policies towards recovery with the support of international institutions and organisations. Within the recovery, career guidance and career development can enhance re-employment and longer-term labour market engagement e.g. by supporting individuals in their efforts to retrain, find new jobs or develop new businesses. (ILO/ETF, 2021). In these circumstances, career development support systems must look beyond providing information about existing job opportunities or choosing an education or career. It is necessary to employ a stronger systemic approach in transforming the career development systems and connect them with lifelong learning and skills strategies in accordance with the ongoing changes in the society.

A key success factor in defining relevant priorities in the recovery strategies is accurate knowledge about career development system and solid evidence on its impact and outcomes to wider community development. Partnerships with providers, employers and key stakeholders is crucial in achieving the necessary political support, wide participation, and engagement in the recovery process. A structured rationale and framework for national system development has emerged from a series of international reviews on career development systems in (e.g. OECD, 2004a; Sultana, 2004; Watts & Fretwell 2004; Zelloth, 2009). These reviews examined national career development policies, systems, variously defined delivery modes and mechanisms,

Building on the experiences in previous international reviews this report introduces a process in four countries (Armenia, Moldova, Panama and Viet Nam) how a national review of career development system can be used in identifying priorities for continuous improvement of national career development support systems and in engaging key stakeholders for further cooperation. In documenting the review process countries were already applying the new ILO/ETF review model for career development services based on a Theory of Change for Systems and Policy. This report present findings from the four national review reports as well as parallel evidence from previous international evaluations of national career development systems and from the experiences of the G20 Training Strategy in skills development and employment needs in a range of countries.

This report presents the rationale for the country reviews, the features of the ToC review model, examples of national career development practices and policies in accordance with the review model key features, remaining challenges and recommendations for further actions. The report illustrates the added value of ongoing national review processes and how they are already contributing to system and policy development.





## 2. Rethinking career development

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Demographic change, new ways of working, internationalisation and the reconfiguration of work have profound implications for society and the skills that the labour market needs. These changes have also impacted on the concept of 'career'. Instead of a 'job for life', a career can be defined as an individual life path with multiple transitions in learning, work and in other settings where individual capacities and competences are learned and/or used. This implies that education and learning is no longer simply about the transition to adulthood but involves increasingly lifelong learning.

The ILO's Commission for the Future of Work calls on the use of technology in support of decent work through a human-centred agenda which puts workers' rights and the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the heart of economic social and environmental policies (ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019). The commission also recognizes that employment is key to social integration, while at the same time provides individuals with dignity and purpose. Although technology provides considerable employment opportunities to youth in both developing and developed countries, many young people are starting their careers in a less secure employment environment as the previous generation (Global Commission on the Future of Work, 2018). In some cases, this is being regarded as a disruption of technological change.

Increasing complexity of the world of work has implications for how the individual experiences transitions (Cedefop, 2016) and for the level of support they need in entering and re-entering the labour market. According to OECD (2020) and ILO (2020), the lockdown measures during the COVID-19 Pandemic had impact on business activities in different sectors, widened inequality, disrupted education and undermined confidence in the future. On the skills supply side, those who lost their jobs need to upskill or retrain to find work. On the demand side, alongside with the adoption of digital technologies there is an increasing demand for high-level skills. Within the recovery, career guidance and career development can enhance re-employment and longer-term labour market engagement e.g. by supporting individuals in their efforts to retrain, find new jobs or develop new businesses. (ILO/ETF, 2021).

Wider policy interest for career development has emerged from series of international reviews on the organisation, management and delivery of career services and how career development contributes to wider policy goals in education and in the labour market. The first global OECD 14-country career guidance review in 2000 (OECD 2004a) was followed by parallel reviews using the same or slightly modified instruments (Sultana, 2004; Watts & Fretwell 2004; Zelloth, 2009).

The reviews and subsequent recommendations have acted as a catalyst for structured collaborative initiatives between international organisations. The OECD and the European Commission produced a handbook (OECD 2004b) for policy makers and a similar handbook (ILO 2006) addressed to low and middle-income countries was published by the International Labour Organisation. The recommendations have been further elaborated within eight International Symposia on Career Development and Public Policy (Watts, Bezanson and McCarthy, 2014). The Symposia communiques have summarised the progress made in participating countries with subsequent recommendations for further national initiatives. The international reviews have also generated a comprehensive methodology and criteria for benchmarking and assessing career development policy implementation (McCarthy & Borbely-Pecze, 2021).

In July 2021, the Inter-Agency Working Group on career guidance (WGCG) with members from six international organisations<sup>1</sup> published a joint statement on the importance of investing in career development. According to WGCG, career development has an essential part in helping people of all ages and backgrounds to navigate future working life. The investments in career development can be expected to provide positive economic, educational and social returns both to individuals and society (Cedefop et al., 2021).



### 3. Applying a theory of change for systems and policy development

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International evidence show that career development services vary in different countries according to the political and administrative structure of the country, to the level of economic development and socio-cultural factors. (e.g. OECD, 2004a; Sultana & Watts, 2006; Watts 2014). In most countries, career development as a system and as a policy is integrated into lifelong learning or national employment strategies or into sub-strategies related, for example, to schools, VET, adult education, occupational health and active ageing. However, in many countries, access to career development programmes and services is limited with many individuals e.g. working people, people living in rural areas and disadvantaged adults, often struggling to access support.

Many countries are facing challenges in establishing a coherent and a holistic career development system for all age groups. One reason is that expectations from career development are high and diverse among users and service providers. New and innovative career guidance practice and tools are emerging in response to labour market changes, but in many countries services are fragmented and delivered separately through a range of education and training institutions, public and private employment services and specialist providers. In LMICs the challenges tend to be greater as publicly funded career services are often vulnerable to political changes and funding mechanisms. Finally, women in LMICs often face difficulties in accessing services due to strict adherence to traditional roles in their families and communities (ILO/ETF 2021; ILO 2006). Understanding the challenges confronting the career development services enables the policy makers and career practitioners to construct policies and interventions that are relevant to current context.

International reviews of career guidance policy (Watts, 2014) have observed that policy makers expect career development focus on the individuals' goals while also contributing to public policy objectives. As an individual right career development enhances successful transitions for individuals. It can viewed also as a soft policy instrument and a mechanism for the wider community capacity building. Building on the experience of past international and European efforts to construct career development systems based on evidence about impact and effectiveness of career services, ILO and ETF have compiled a model (ILO/ETF 2021) for a national review which consists of:

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<sup>1</sup> Members engaged in the WGCG are the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), The European Commission, the European Training Foundation (ETF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

- ▶ An approach to the enhancement of national career development support systems in the form of a theory of change, and
- ▶ A roadmap for system development.

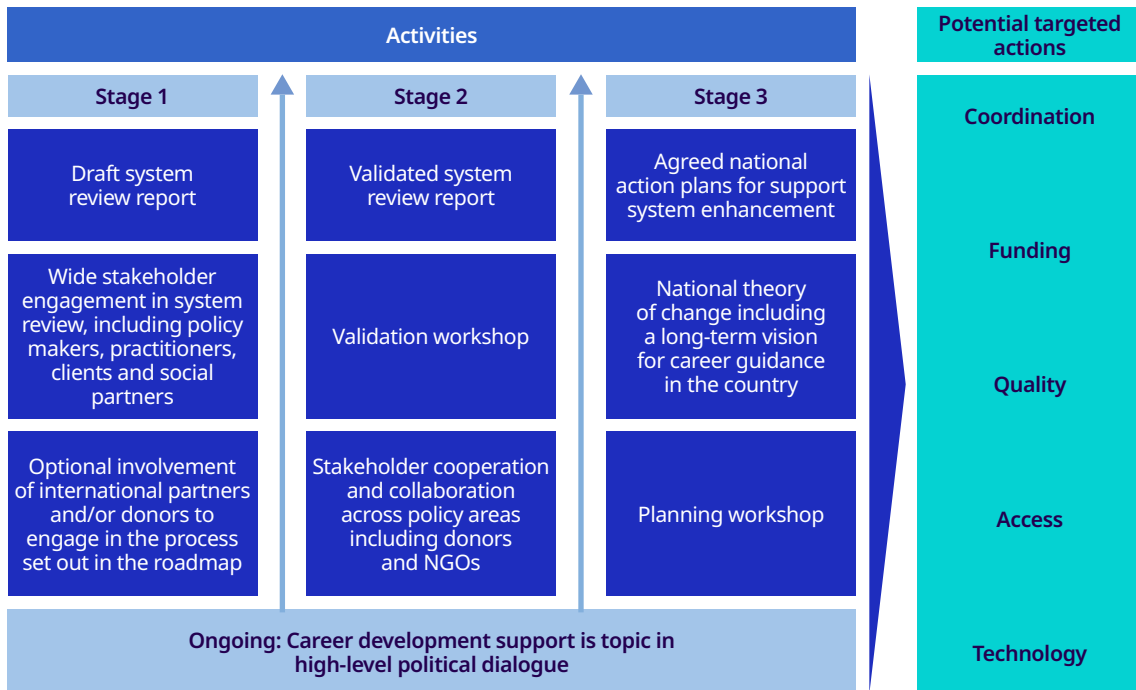
Both, the ToC and the roadmap constitute a framework which highlights five key elements that must be customised to country contexts and translated into country-context sensitive activities, outcomes and specific indicators.

- ▶ **Coordination:** Includes all aspects related to formal coordination, strategic leadership, governance, cooperation between stakeholders.
- ▶ **Access:** Includes all aspects related to enabling access to career development support by all individuals and groups, especially the most vulnerable. It includes accessibility, cultural sensitivity and user-friendly delivery, establishment of services, service entitlements, outreach initiatives and embeddedness of career learning in other activities.
- ▶ **Funding:** Includes all aspects related to public funding, private participation (including clients), donor funding, establishment of incentives and pooling of financial resources. It also includes aspects closely related to coordination such as accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of fund management;
- ▶ **Quality:** Includes a wide range of aspects which contribute to raise and maintain the quality of provision, including the definition of standards of service and ethical treatment of personal information, professionalisation and training of practitioners and other staff, quality of tools, methodologies and information, and continuous monitoring and evaluation processes.
- ▶ **Technology:** Includes all aspects related to the appropriate use of technology in the delivery of services, including design and implementation of digital and distance services, use of technology in learning environments and careers centres, use of communication platform, implementation of individual digital portfolios, or the use of innovative solutions such as AI.

The five elements reflect a significant body of research and analysis undertaken over the last two decades on career development support systems, particularly on career guidance (see for example Cedefop Inventory; ELGPN 2015; ILO 2006; OECD 2004a; Watts and Sultana 2004). The selected elements act as reference points for the development of national career development systems.

The review process requires the development of a number of activities, defined by national stakeholders. The theory of change emphasises a nation-wide *process* of increased exchange, collaboration and cooperation as central to facilitating system development. It proposes a participatory process of a national system review to create an evidence base on services and the system that informs the participatory development of a national theory of change and related action plan for system development in three levels; (i) system level, (ii) provider level and (iii) practitioner level (See Figure 1).

► **Figure 1. Roadmap to career development support system enhancement (ILO/ETF, 2021)**



Achieving change at system level is, nevertheless, a potentially difficult process, which requires a good understanding of national needs and untapped potentials. It is also a process which requires early engagement of key stakeholders in search of an agreed vision and a set of priorities. Absence of coordinated action results in misdirected investments and the setup of services that do not address the needs of the population and enterprises.

This generic ToC provides a general reference framework for a process of the development of the national theory of change and an action plan, but it needs to be customized in accordance with local conditions.

This model has already been tested in national reviews conducted by ILO in three countries (Moldova, Panama and Viet Nam) and application is already planned on another 4, with the cooperation of ETF. This report also presents findings from a review Armenia, that was partially supported by the methodology underlying the complete review process. During the national review in Armenia the development of the model was still in progress but could feed the national review process. All these countries share an aspiration on talent development and lifelong learning. The countries have defined national development strategies with an aim to human development and opportunities for young people in transition to labour market. For example, the National Development Strategy 2030 in Moldova includes four basic elements of sustainable development: a sustainable and inclusive economy; reliable human and social capital; honest and efficient institutions; and a healthy environment (ETF, 2020).

On the other hand, these countries are sharing similar challenges. There are inequalities between regions and populations and often significant differences in proportion of trained workers between urban and rural areas. In rural areas the career choices of young people are traditionally influenced by regional and ethnic cultures as well as the factors of family. The values of individuals, their interests and aptitudes are often excluded in the decision-making processes. In rural areas young persons have difficulties in getting to labour market and work aspirations might be limited to fairly small spectrum of professions. In addition, parents are paying more attention to their sons than daughters.

Limited opportunities for decent work or labour market opportunities to employ the whole population in rural and remote areas accelerate domestic migration. Particularly young people leave their home villages to look for work in cities and can expose themselves to new risks. The relatively high level of informal employment in these countries indicate less job security and higher job mobility for young people in early stages of their careers. Informal employment creates additional risks for young parents and often women, who after childbirth have less difficulties to keep their jobs due to lack of maternity protection in informal jobs.

These countries inform that economic crisis have had a negative impact on education system development. Due to lack of easily accessible enterprises or professional who could visit in schools, students do not necessarily have opportunities to deepen their understanding of future working life. Gaps in early years of learning can limit adequate performance in post-secondary education, in workplaces and in the further ability to develop complex skills required in the labour market.

The four reviewed countries have taken actions to enhance career education in their education systems. However, comprehensive career development systems are new concepts, and a most common understanding of career guidance is a connected to choice of occupation and the choice of courses of study.

Governmental and civil society stakeholders in these countries have expressed their interest to ILO in developing career development within their education and employment policies as well as widen access to career development services for their entire population. The reviews have provided options to enhance stakeholders' participation in system development, for example by promoting a consultation via surveys and workshops and/or focus groups regarding their vision of the desirable changes and improvements to the system. National universities or research institutes have been involved in this process with the wider view of a role of research in providing evidence for system development in the long run. The reviews have initiated collaboration and cooperation which could be continued on informal basis as cross-ministerial working group also involving other actors such as NGOs and social partners and service providers.

The following chapters describe the main elements of the review processes and identify the added value of the review in identification key strengths of national career development services as well as key issues which need policy attention in developing coherent career development services in the country.

The reviews were carried out in co-operation with national policy makers and stakeholders. The process identified key features of the career development services and evidence for prioritization and planning of outcomes and indicators in the national theory of change, as well as the exact setup of an action plan to be achieved.

The full process of a national career development system review processes consisted of following phases:

1. Stakeholder engagement and system review;
2. Validation of review and policy priorities;
3. Development of national theory of change and action plan.

A comprehensive national review process with the three phases was carried out in Viet Nam from April to June 2021. The data was collected through desktop research and key informant interviews using the tools suggested by ILO and the international consultant. The motivation and commitment towards more targeted system development emerged among key stakeholders during the consultation workshop and validation workshop.

**► A full national review was carried in Viet Nam from April to June 2021 as follows:****Stakeholder engagement and system review**

In Viet Nam the review process brought together representatives from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Hanoi Public Employment Service Center, high schools, private service providers and social enterprises. The aim was to promote ongoing high-level dialogue, raise awareness among policy makers, social partners, donors, universities and other relevant stakeholders about the relevance of career guidance and its multiple impacts. The aim was also to promote further informative meetings between national stakeholders, potential donors, international partners as well as through the dissemination of written information.

The national system review was evidence-based and facilitated by an independent national expert in close cooperation with national public administration and international partners. The review process included policy and administrative documentation, research reports and relevant data, as well as a structured consultation process (interviews) that allowed to identify existing structures, services, gaps in coverage and development opportunities, taking into consideration the various views from administration, practitioners, clients/users and providers.

**Validation of review and policy priorities**

The draft national system review report was sent to relevant stakeholders to validate information. A revised report was drafted on the basis of the received feedback. The revised report was sent to stakeholders, alongside a list of critical questions to debate. A national validation meeting was organized collaboratively between national authorities and international partners and engaging all relevant stakeholders. The meeting publicly validated the results of the report. After the validation meeting, a synthesis report of the discussion was produced by an independent national expert, which constituted the basis for the subsequent development of a national theory of change and action plan for Viet Nam.

**Development of a national theory of change and action plans**

The lead organization in charge of the national review coordinated workshops for the participatory development of a national theory of change (ToC). Based on the national findings, the workshops identified long-term outcomes as well as intermediary and short-term outcomes for further development. In addition, the workshops prepared on an action plan which included actions to be undertaken in the short, medium and long term towards the achievement of the outcomes, as well as information on funding. The joint action plans were agreed by all stakeholders to show their commitment. As a whole, the national ToC shows the various stages towards the achievement of the overall outcome, providing a systematic approach to uphold motivation and engagement, and to understand planning documents as living documents.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021



## 4. Context for career development services and links with lifelong learning

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Career development operates within a tradition of concern for the welfare of the individual and a respect for the dignity of each person. According to the ILO's recommendation No. 195 "...Members should promote equal opportunities for, and access to, career guidance and skill upgrading for all workers, as well as support for retraining employees whose jobs are at risk". The same instrument expresses that individuals should be free to participate and access to career information and guidance, job placement services and job search support services. The member countries should provide information and guidance on entrepreneurship, promote entrepreneurial skills, and raise awareness among educators and trainers of the important role of enterprises in creating growth and decent jobs.

The ILO R195 (2004) puts career development in the heart of education, training and lifelong learning which promotes "interests of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society as a whole, especially considering the critical challenge of attaining full employment, poverty eradication, social inclusion and sustained economic growth in the global economy" the Over time, career development has been acknowledged as an activity that contributes both to private good and public good (OECD, 2004). On individual level, one objective of guidance is to provide personal job satisfaction towards improving work performance (ILC 32nd, 1949). According to this definition, the aim of career development has been to maximise the potential of each person for themselves and the world-at-large (Perera & Athanasou, 2019). This wider interpretation implies that career development can be seen a public interest that transcends education, training, employment and social protection at national level.

According to Sultana (2017), the term career development as such is problematic in global context, while it carries with meanings, orientations, practices and aspirations, which do not necessarily connect with the contexts in which it is deployed. Niles et al. (2019) identify also the linguistic challenges and the misuse of the key terminology in the field. Many of the theories on foundational theories on career development were developed years ago in a different social context, which may be perceived as more stable, community-centred, disciplinary and mechanistic, compared to today's rapidly changing world of work (Vondracek, 2008). Recently, the impact of migration and changing socioeconomic circumstances has raised questions about the suitability of Western models of career guidance for working with migrants and minority populations or in pursuit of economic transformation (Aluede et al. 2017; Arulmani, 2019, Maree, 2019; Stead & Watson, 2006; Watson, 2013). Thus, the concept of 'career' can be interpreted in different ways and is sometimes replaced with the term livelihood planning (e.g. Arulmani, 2009).

The word guidance implies that individuals are involved in exercising personal agency in making choices out of a range of available options. Western values such as individualism and autonomy, the centrality of the work role, affluence, and the linearity or progressive nature of career development, may have limited utility for clients whose worldview is more aligned with collectivistic values (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010). The individualistic approach might be non-relevant and non-understandable for clients from collectivistic societies (Arulmani, 2012).

During the last decades, the definition of career development has evolved with a paradigm shift from intervention at key points in an individual's life to a lifelong perspective; and from the provision of external expert support to individual developing and utilising career adaptability and acquiring career management skills. The acquisition of career management skills is included as a part of cognitive and metacognitive skills in the Global framework on core skills for life and work in the 21st Century (ILO, 2021).

The Significant in this respect is the balance between employability creation, coping with unemployed and understanding the dynamics of the world of work.

This report relies on the international definition of career guidance and counselling as covering services intended to assist people of any age and at any point in their lives, to manage their careers and to make education, training and occupational choices that are meaningful for them (IAG, 2021). To fulfil its objectives, services related to career development take many forms and are implemented at different levels. The concept “career development” in this paper is also known by other terms such as ‘career guidance’, ‘career counselling’, ‘careers information, advice and guidance’, ‘employment counselling’, ‘lifelong guidance’, ‘professional orientation’, ‘vocational counselling/guidance’, ‘vocational orientation’, ‘workforce development’ or ‘livelihood planning’ in different countries. Within high-income countries, career development and career guidance are the most common terms, as they very much entail the idea of a professional career path, while vocational guidance is focused upon the choice of occupation (Hansen, 2006). For the purposes of this paper, the preferred term is career development, as most appropriate reference to the objective of the pilot activities in Armenia’s and Viet Nam’s TVET system.

In most countries, career development covers a wide diversity of career development support services and activities, e.g. (ILO/ETF, 2021):

- **Career guidance and counselling:** services intended to support individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers (career management skills). Career guidance and counselling can include a wide range of activities, such as skills assessments, advice, information, development of job search skills, mentoring, counselling, networking, job placement among others and be delivered face-to-face, at a distance or in a blended setting.
- **Career education:** well organised and structured learning activities offered by schools, public employment services, NGOs, social partners, universities or community-based services aimed at developing individuals’ career management skills, covering self-learning, building of capacities to identify and interpret labour market information as well as learning and career opportunities, make learning and career decisions, plans and act upon them.
- **Career development support for the formally employed:** for traditional employees in the formal economy, this refers to human resource management activities aimed at developing career management skills of employees, with the purpose of supporting individual skill development and training, skills utilisation, productivity, innovation and smart specialisation, and promoting strategic staff planning and development. **Career development support for workers in non-standard forms of employment or in the informal economy:** Many individuals working in non-standard forms of employment or in the informal economy are unaware of the possibilities they may have to access qualifications, decent work and benefit from social protection. Outreach initiatives that mobilize national, sectoral and local actors are key to meet the needs of these workers. These services, still not well defined in many countries, tend to integrate or coordinate learning incentives, financial and business counselling and career guidance.

The career guidance person or individual professional provider of guidance including specialised support, information, advice and career counselling is in this report referred to as the ‘career practitioner’.





## 5. National career development systems and subsystems

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The system review provides evidence for a joint understanding of the existing system and an entry point for reflection on a joint vision for system development. Starting from country-context specific existing capacity and challenges for career development support is the best basis to start system development. Highlighting and building on existing capacity is appreciative and better connects a vision to existing systems (ILO/ETF, 2021).

Current career guidance delivery modes can be categorised either according to the user groups and sectors where career development services are provided or according to the features of the overall service provision. In most cases, national ideologies and philosophies shape how services are organised, managed, and delivered (Barnes et al., 2020).

### For whom?

Career development is frequently understood as a concept purely related to the employability of young people and especially concerning those who are about to complete basic education (youth among 13-18 years old, depending on the countries and individual specificities), who are expected to choose a career that will ultimately lead them to a smooth transition into the labour market. In today's reality, these transitions are being more and more emphasised by the different drivers of change in the labour market: demographic changes (ageing in some regions and increasing young populations in some others) globalisation, technology disruptions, climate change and migration. Nevertheless, in today's evolving world of work, the need for career development has been broadened as to also support people through different transitions, they may face during their entire working lives. In this sense, career guidance provision for the future of work is also expected to consider:

- ▶ Workers who may have extended their working life and need to adapt their skills to new technologies
- ▶ Workers whose occupation's may be impacted by global trade
- ▶ Migrant workers whose skills would need to be adapted to the conditions of their host communities
- ▶ Individuals who may have to change their careers due to disruptions in their current vocation due to technology or climate change (With the appropriate guidance mechanisms, individuals may be able to make a transition to occupations in the green economy.)
- ▶ Workers with non-standard forms of employment or who work in informal sectors
- ▶ How to identify and overcome gender bias in employment

Beyond these individuals, career development services are aimed not only at students and job-seekers; but also to parents and teachers, their communities, ultimately aiming at a comprehensive and flexible lifelong learning career development system. Furthermore, career development has the potential of

becoming an enabler of a more inclusive education system and the labour market ideally becoming a tool for social cohesion.

Career development is most effective if extends across the lifespan (e.g. Hooley, 2014) as people are engaging in learning throughout their lives to remain current in the labour market (McMahon, Patton, & Tatham, 2003). For this reason, career guidance provision is often spread across a range of providers from schools to community-based organisations to employers. The main organisational structures for providing career guidance services is commonly divided into three main groups (Watts, 2013):

- ▶ Career guidance and career education within educational institutions
- ▶ Career guidance in workplaces
- ▶ Career guidance services in the community

### Career guidance and career education within schools

Career guidance and career education in schools follows a programmed and gradual approach to skill development, reflecting a curriculum, and relying on a mix of classroom activities, networking with professionals and work experience or community service opportunities (ILO/ETF, 2021)

At schools, the career education programmes can be delivered as a stand-alone and timetabled subject, as a series of themes taught across different subjects in the curriculum, or through extra-curricular activities. A cross-curricular approach helps students to think through work-related issues through different subject areas. Extra-curricular activities can include e.g. Career weeks or career fairs, workplace visit, work experience programmes or employer visits in schools. A most comprehensive approach is to include career education as a compulsory or optional timetabled subject within the curriculum (e.g. Vuorinen & Kettunen, 2019; Zelloth, 2009).

According the review findings there was varying levels of integration of career guidance into education systems. In all countries, the legislation stipulates career guidance as an important theme in the education system but does not provide clear guidelines regarding the structure of the services and the human resources involved in the process. In **Moldova** and **Panama**, career education is integrated in other subjects. The transversal guidance-related themes include modules e.g. on personal development, civic education, development of socio-cultural environment, innovations and local economy, future skills needs, decision-making skills, entrepreneurship and job-searching skills. In addition to career education, general schools may have school psychologists who help children and young people succeed academically, socially, behaviorally and emotionally, perform tests and carry out activities of career guidance and counselling. It was also an attempt to implement the career centre model in collaboration with public institutions.<sup>2</sup>

The content of the career education programmes can also be infused in other subjects, implemented in work-based production activities or through extra-class activities. For example, in **Viet Nam** at boarding schools for ethnic minorities in mountainous areas students are allowed to participate in production labor in agriculture or practicing in restaurants and hotels. The aim is to link career education in daily activities in real working life.

In the reviewed countries career education activities are usually undertaken by classroom teachers and are combined with other class activities. The training of career teachers varies and the activities are complemented with testimonies of people and organisations that are presented to students during career fairs or other career guidance related activities. This implies that career education means mainly occupational information. As teachers do not have enough necessary career guidance information and might lack motivation, career education is not implemented well, leading to low efficiency of career education in schools.

<sup>2</sup> National Career Development Review, Moldova, Interim Report 2021.

In **Armenia**, Professional orientation services at general education institutions are delivered based on the General Education Standard approved by the Government Decree No 136-Ն of February 4, 2021. A sample of curriculum is provided by the Professional Orientation and Capacity Development (POCD) Centre and each school develops its own based on it.

According to the model developed by the POCD Centre and proposed to the MoESCS in 2013, career guidance services should be provided from elementary school (1-4 grades), in secondary school it should be divided into two stages: separately for 5-7 grades, and 8-9 grades, and in high school (10-12 grades). For each age group a separate objectives and outcomes are described in General Education Standard. But, presently, the insertion of career guidance activities are in process in middle school (8-9 grades) and in high school highlighting the importance of professional self-determination of students.

According to the model provided by the POCD Centre, professional orientation activities at school start for the 7rd grade students. At least one hour is provided for professional orientation activities each week (34 hours for the whole educational year). It's preferred that the services are provided by the specialists trained with the methodology of POCD Centre. Before the start of educational year, the pedagogue or pedagogical team, who is responsible for the provision of professional orientation services present educational plan based on the above mentioned methodology. Besides the modules, according to the educational plan, visits to employers from different sectors, educational institutions and State Employment agencies are planned. The educational plans also include watching and discussions of films about different professions and other active events (professions' days, job fairs, etc), individual consultations and activities with parents.

Currently, actions are taken towards institutionalization of the system. In 2020, National Education Standard for General Education was reviewed and by the suggestion of the POCD Centre, separate indicators were added to the outcomes of the of elementary, middle and high school students, aimed at the conscious career choice.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

In **Viet Nam**, career guidance activities for students are carried out right from the primary school level. The duration for this activity varies by grade level and is regulated as follows: Primary level is 10%; lower secondary school level is 20% and high school level is 30% of 105 learning sessions in experiential-career activities that are not work-based learning. 105 learning sessions in experiential-career activities regulated by the MOET include four types of activities: (1) experiment for oneself; (2) experiment towards society; (3) Discovery of nature and (4) career guidance. Thus, each school year, career guidance activities will have about 10 sessions for primary school; 21 sessions for secondary school and 31 sessions per year for high school to conduct activities for students. Literature review shows that all these activities are conducted by teachers at schools but there are not yet standards for professionalism and ethics code. The career education will be more formally integrated in the curriculum from 2021-2022 on for secondary school level and from 2022-2023 on for high school level as the plan of MOET.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021

According to Barnes et al. (2020) infusion of career themes in subjects and introduction of compulsory or elective courses in both basic and secondary education is a clear trend globally. Career education acts as a link between the school, community and working life promoting social justice, equity, equality and inclusion and preventing marginalisation in terms of education and employment. Another aspect of the intensification of career learning in schools is the increased cooperation with potential employers and their associations. Career education informs about the opportunity structures which are available and

which education and training pathways can be followed to access livelihoods. It can also address the issue of attitudes towards work, examining their cause and origins, and problematising them in relation to broader understandings of the values that should guide a community in its efforts to generate and distribute wealth in an effective and just manner (Sultana, 2019).

## Career guidance in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Career guidance in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) assist young people to know and understand vocational learning pathways and choices prior to and at entry to TVET to link these to further vocational learning and work opportunities, and to make successful transitions to those opportunities (ELGPN, 2015). According to Watts (2013) it is important that prior to entry all young people should be aware of TVET options alongside the other options available to them. Career guidance can help young people to better understand the transfer and consequences of their choices to progress in learning. This is particularly the case where TVET has a poor historical reputation. It is also important that career guidance in TVET should be supported by high-quality career information on the main characteristics of the given labour market, e.g. trends in current and future skills and qualification demands, job vacancies, information on work environments, job progression rates as well as the available TVET options.

The four countries reviewed have a number of national initiatives in developing TVET programmes, but there is significant variation among the countries in integration of career guidance in TVET. **Armenia** and **Viet Nam** inform about structured career education programmes and career guidance related activities. In **Viet Nam**, career education is conducted in schools from the ninth grade to the twelfth grade monthly. In 2010, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) published a teacher's book on career guidance that allows them to perform their role. In Vocational training centers, students can practice a specific profession and compare their interests and abilities with requirements of these professions.<sup>3</sup> However, there is not sufficient external support for the teachers from career practitioners or experts on career education.

In **Armenia**, the introduction of professional orientation and career guidance services in TVET institutions was launched in 2013. A package of materials related to the institutional and methodological base of the TVET institutions' Career Guidance units developed by POCD Centre and then piloted with support of the ETF project "ETF Activities in Armenia Linked to the Reforms of Vocational, Education and Training", during the period of 2013-2016. The package includes: Exemplary Regulation on the TVET institutions Career Guidance Unit; Job Profile of the Career Consultant/Coordinator; Exemplary questionnaire for monitoring of the career guidance units. The package was officially transferred from MoLSA to MoESCS in March 2017, and then, in May 2017, MoESCS disseminated it to the TVET institutions.

Presently, all TVET institutions have a designated vacancies for career specialists and established new internal units for career services. The main goal of these units is to promote the enhancement of students' and graduates' competitiveness at labour market and the development of their career planning skills by providing career information, advice, career education and guidance services.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

3 National Career Development Review, Viet Nam Report 2021.

In TVET and in other forms of work-based learning career guidance can be particularly useful in increasing individuals' understanding of work-based learning (engagement) and how to enhance their skills and employability (achievement). It assists effective utilisation of the skills developed within work-based learning by supporting individuals in transitions from work-based learning programmes to sustainable employment (Borbely-Pecze & Hutchinson, 2014).

For young people at risk and for potential early school-leavers special VET programmes provide opportunities to acquire employability skills. Well-integrated career guidance and support from teaching staff and specialists help students to understand better their barriers to learning and to take advantage of workplace learning and to overcome these barriers and avoid drop out.

## Career Guidance in Higher Education

The four countries provide limited information on career guidance services in higher education institutes. However, as the link between higher education and labour market has become more diffused and complex, the need for career guidance services has increased from the enrolment process to the transition to the working life. In higher education, career guidance helps students to select appropriate study programmes and to cope with transition to higher education. Career guidance provides support for those students whose initial choices of higher education programmes did not prove to be successful or meaningful. It concerns also a number of adult learners who are seeking options for further professional development. Furthermore, it supports students to enhance the potential of their academic experience and link it to their personal and career development (ELGPN, 2015).

In **Moldova**, centres of career guidance from higher education operate based on a national methodological guide provided by the Ministry of education. This methodological guide contains the framework regulation of the centre (methodology, finalities, services, etc.). The centers are expected to offer career guidance for high school students; support students in designing their career; monitor the professional evolution of the graduates and support them in the career management process. The centres deliver career guidance also for students with special needs; support university teachers in the process of teaching career development; collaborate with economic entities, NGOs, associations, etc., in order to capitalize on the training possibilities of volunteering. The beneficiaries of services are: high school students; students of higher education institutions; university graduates to support their professional development; teachers, to support the development of their professional careers; parents of candidates, parents of students, employers. These centres offer: assistance to enterprises, regarding the recruitment of university graduates; monitoring the employment of university graduates; organising round tables and meetings with university graduates and leaders of companies, etc.

Source: National review report Moldova, 2021

Given the increased demand of the labour market, the competences related to job search and entrepreneurial skills are essential for higher education graduates. The acquisition of these skills can be part of optional learning or of compulsory learning with academic credits attached. This kind of programmes may be delivered centrally by a career services or by faculty or department with central or external support. According to Rott (2015), the relationship between university studies, employability and entrepreneurial competence is an important feature of a university in the modern society.

## Career guidance services for students with special needs

Career guidance services for young people at risk or for the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups consist of a range of both preventive and compensative measures and activities. Within compulsory education, the aim is to assist potential early school-leavers to stay in education or to assist those who have left and are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Prevention and intervention both aim at early intervention as part of school's strategies to detect and assist potential school-leavers to find meaning to stay at school or to make well-planned exit strategies and individual action plans for further learning, work and other life goals.

Career guidance services can be customised to meet the needs of individuals with special needs, migrants, refugees and others whose personal, social, cultural or linguistic circumstances act as barriers to their integration in learning and work opportunities and to active citizenship. The career guidance activities may be part of outreach and/or specialised education training programmes and part of transition support to learning and work. For example, in **Moldova** a cross-boarder partnership for inclusive career guidance aims to offer better access of Moldovan and Romanian youth with disabilities to labour markets by providing inclusive career guidance services.<sup>4</sup>

**Panama** informs about special attention to vulnerable groups. Ministry of Social Developments (MIDES) carries out a special programme which focuses on adult literacy, with a decentralised model that reaches the most remote regions of the country. The programme is based on a person from the beneficiary's own family or a network of significant others in the family being trained as the key source of support.

One identified challenge for successful implementation for this programme is connected to limited literacy skills of participants, which can prevent the acquisition of necessary labour market skills of the participants. Another focus in Panama is programmes (CEFODEA and ENFOCA) for youth at risk for being out of the education system and living in communities with high level of violence. The programme serves young people in a situation of social vulnerability and tries to find these people study programmes and paid internships in companies. The programme consists also workshops on socio-emotional skills not directly linked to specific professional skills training.

Source: National review report Panama, 2021

As well as emphasising career development, developing countries integrate career guidance in education to respond to a range of other issues that affect young people's engagement in education. For example, policy makers in Eastern and Southern Africa seek to address concerns about the psychological stressors that afflict young people who have been directly or indirectly exposed to pandemics or to war and conflict. Similarly, post-traumatic stress among refugee children and their families influences policy and practice in countries that receive refugees. These children need specific support to address language barriers and cultural issues, as well as anxiety and depression. (e.g. Köse, 2017; OECD, 2019)

## Role of parents in career guidance

In many countries individuals are expected to take career choices at an early age. For this reason, parents play an important role on helping students to understand the labour market, how employment relations work, the range of options and existent possibilities. Parents are also the first role models and to whom most people feel confident and linked to. Parents' preferences and the perceived popularity or prestige of the professions may have impact on career choices. However, parents are not always ready help their

4 National Career Development Review, Moldova, Interim Report 2021.

children obtain the correct information and develop a critical reflection about their occupational options or regarding the careers being in current and future demand in the labour market.

The lack of parent's connection with academic occupations in least developed, rural areas and/or with vocational trades and occupation in urban developed areas, creates a disconnect among economic sectors. According to the national review in **Viet Nam**,<sup>5</sup> young people in rural areas tend to make career choices based on their family experience and expectations, and in several cases even on stereotypes transmitted by the family. Young people are therefore not always focused on their own interest, aptitudes and skills when choosing a career path. Given the common lack of expertise of parents on career guidance methods, youth are not always helped to understand available options and how to act upon them vis-a-vis realistic labour market opportunities (See also Chatani & Makhoul, 2017). In these circumstances career education can provide an opportunity to overcome the legacy of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage by supporting children and young people in pursuing aspirations that suit both their own abilities and interests and national priorities and the public good.

In the reviewed countries, career development of girls and women does not parallel that of men and boys. In **Viet Nam**, parents pay traditionally more attention to their sons than daughters and boys have more priorities in studying. In case of financial difficulties, girls are often asked to stop their studying and give the change to a boy. This implies that women face additional and different career-related issues than do men and have different options to progress in their career (see also Bimrose, M. McMahon, & M. Watson, 2015; Hiebert, Borgen, & Schober, 2010). Since the purpose of career development is to assist each individual realise their true potential and to acquire the requisite skills to contribute to national economic growth and development, practice frameworks need to be adopted that reflect the true experiences of girls and women (Bimrose, 2019).

According to Barnes et al (2020a), parental involvement in career guidance activities is more aspirational than systematised or mandated. The European Training foundation (2020) encourages countries to develop explicit strategies to engage parents and carers more explicitly in career development services. **Armenia** already provides instructions for parents how to discover the child's potential and to explore the world of work in a guidebook "The role of parents as mentors in professional orientation". In addition, in middle school (grades 5-9) the parents are engaged in the career education by providing the students visits to their workplaces.<sup>6</sup>

## Role of peers

The national review reports do not identify peers as a significant resource for career related discourse. However, a good practice for career guidance is inviting individuals who have undertaken TVET education to share their experience with students. This may include visits by fresh graduates and or experienced individuals who may be able to talk to students regarding the challenges that undertaking one or another trade and/or type of education may entail.

The current technology provides new opportunities to engage peer to career development processes and challenges the traditional career guidance relationships as the individuals have access to same career related information as the practitioners. They can use technology for mutual communication on career related issues among peers with or without the help of career practitioners. Education and training systems therefore need to be aware of the need to provide learners with new career management skills, and collaborative forms of career engagement. Co-careering occurs, when shared expertise and meaningful co-construction on career issues take place with and among community members (Kettunen, 2017).

5 National Career Development Review, Viet Nam Report 2021.

6 National Career Development Review, Armenia Report 2021.

## Career guidance services in the community

In addition to educational institutions and workplaces, services can be provided within the community. Career guidance for adults are delivered by both public (such as public employment services, public education and training institutes or public career guidance agencies) and private (such as employers, private training institutes and private practitioners) providers (OECD, 2020). Career guidance provision in rural areas may encounter different challenges as these of the urban areas. These challenges may be more accentuated depending on the development level of the country. Some of the challenges that rural areas face are:

- The lack of career practitioners and the lack of training and retraining of the available counsellors;
- The lack of funding for career guidance activities in rural areas, countries should be aware of funding distribution for rural and urban areas;
- The lack of easily accessible enterprises and or professionals who could visit or be visited by students in order to have a deeper understanding of certain occupations;
- The lack of direct contact with enough labour market opportunities to employ the population;
- Rural areas lack sufficient IT resources for the provision online career guidance services
- Counsellors have different expectations form their students than in urban areas. (Neale-McFall & Owens, 2016).

Therefore, especial arrangements should be done as to integrate the special needs of rural areas towards the establishment of appropriate guidance systems.

In **Panama**, a number society organizations were identified to carry out actions related to professional development services. The Private Sector Council for Educational Assistance (COSPAE), has carried out projects that involve capacity building in the government sector around counseling, guidance and tutoring or mentoring actions. The Foundation for Work, has technical role in the process of standardization and certification of labor competencies.

In addition, the private Catholic University Santa María La Antigua (USMA), hosts a certification centre which response to the needs of rapid qualification of workers linked to recognized certifications in various business sectors, particularly in the information technology sector. The National Association of Human Resources Professionals (ANREH), provides training and updating spaces for this group of professionals, and the Panamanian Association of Business Executives (APEDE) holds thematic forums for its affiliates and a competition for postgraduate scholarships in areas related to economic sciences to promote the development of professionals.

Not-for-profit civil organisations in **Viet Nam** include Vietnamese social enterprises and International and Viet Nameese Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). The study shows that only one social enterprise working on career guidance is Song An. The funding of their services come from the tuition of organising training courses for teachers and training for career counsellors; and also from career counselling services for the individuals.

Some of the activities are provided free of charges such as their sources and quick online career counselling. Currently, the information from their websites shows that they have trained 665 career counsellors, career education teachers and parents with 397 career counselling sessions for individuals and families, especially the moment before the university enrolment. After each training, they could only issue the participation certificate rather than a validation and recognition of skills.

The NGOs working in education notably World Vision, ChildFund, Aide Et Action, Fund of Youth Employment (FYE) have worked in providing career education activities for high school teachers and career guidance for young people specially clubs in universities. The funding does not come from these activities but from their donors. In the case of FYE, they collaborate with TopCV, a



head-hunter in Viet Nam for sourcing labour market information and providing workplace and vacancy information. These NGOs also have promotion fairs in cooperating with businesses and schools for career guidance for young people. Until now, no record of any NGOs working for the career development support to the employees.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021

## Career guidance in Public Employment Services

Public Employment Services (PES) also play an important role as providers of career guidance to new entrants to the labour market and experienced workers. The major users of such services have been the unemployed, as well as other groups on the edge of the labour market such as disabled people (OECD, 2004a). The services often focus on immediate employment goals and are linked to job placement. At the same time, PES have an important role in managing benefit system and active labour market measures (training programmes, public work programmes, entrepreneurship support, wage subsidies) for unemployed individuals (Borbély-Pecze & Watts, 2011).

In the reviewed countries, career development services vary according to the context and operational models of the national PES systems. **Armenia, Moldova and Viet Nam** provide information on career guidance services within PES. In Viet Nam, the employment centres have been established since the early 1990s' and they provide services for unemployed on career choices, training level and study place suitable to their abilities and aspirations. Also, students can go to these centres for education and labour market information including, further education and anticipated skills needs in the labour market. PES centres provide services also for vulnerable groups, low qualified workers and employed workers who want to move to other jobs. However, the centres have difficulties to meet the increased demand due to limited number of staff and limited accurate labour market information.

**In Moldova, The National Agency for Employment (ANOFM/NEA)** provides services for jobseekers based on the Law no. 105 and the Procedure of career guidance. The Procedure of career guidance was revised in 2021 (Appendix of ANOFM Order no. 23/24 February 2021) to offer more flexibility for the ANOFM counsellors which are public servants. ANOFM is a key institution in the provision of both active and passive labour market measures for jobseekers.

The agency has a tripartite management board of nine members, with three representatives each appointed by the government, employers and trade unions. As part of the public administration reform, the ANOFM has been restructured. This includes centralising the system, cutting staff and optimising business operations. The ANOFM currently provides intermediary services, career guidance and counselling; organises job fairs and public works; and provides training to increase the employability of jobseekers and priority groups of people with special needs.

According with the Regulation approved by the Government Decision № 990, 10th October 2018, the NEA's mission is to 'improve employability of the job seekers and support employers in finding skilled labour force and creating new jobs'. The Agency is entitled for a number of functions mainly related to the employment and social policy as well as studying, monitoring and forecasting the labour market at the national level. Provision of services to the beneficiaries, including both passive and active labour market measures, such as paying unemployment benefits, supporting start-ups, organisation of vocational training for unemployed, is the responsibility of the territorial units. Other functions of those units, particularly are: registration of jobseekers and vacancies; monitoring the job placement of the persons after implementing active employment measures; monitoring of registered unemployed; labour market monitoring.

Source: National review report Moldova, 2021

The need to respond to varying individual needs due to the Pandemic within PES is more important than ever. Whelan et al. (2021) stress that it is important to define employability and employment counselling models within a lifelong context and outline their new role within PES. They argue for employment counselling as a continuum from work-first approach to life-first approach. Besides the short-term labour market outcomes, the career guidance services within PES should focus more on enabling career management and making meaningful choices. The new paradigm should help individuals reflect more on their ambitions, interests, qualifications, skills and talents.

## Enterprises

Traditionally, career guidance has been informing individuals about the world of work and career opportunities and supporting individuals in entering to the labour market. Mann, Denis and Percy (2020) highlight the importance of closing the gap between schools and employers and providing students with multiple opportunities to explore, experience in practice and think about the working world and its relationship to their educational progression. The reviewed countries provide examples of activities in bringing the world of work closer to education e.g. in **Viet Nam, Panama and Armenia**.

The **Viet Nam** Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) is the employers' representative organisation and they support career education as one of key activities promoting the business and schools collaboration. In many provinces, VCCI introduced the career guidance toolbox of the ILO to the schools and organised many career orientation days led by the business organisations with the participation of hundreds of young people from high schools. In the career orientation days, normally they also invite the TVET schools and universities in the localities to join. The young people could ask the questions about vacancy and about at-workplace code of conduct from business.

The activity of career education provided by VCCI still stops at each provincial level and apart from promotion in career orientation fairs, they provide also the education for high schools teachers applied the ILO training toolbox in career guidance for the young people in the age range of 14-19 years old while they could not yet support the career development tasks for Human Resource Management within the business as well as the validation and recognition of skills for the workers who are already employed in business (so-called RPL process). All the activities in career education VCCI organise are free of charge from the source of funding by Norway Employer Federation (NHO) since 2018 up to present.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021

According to Hirsh (2021), employers are getting more interested in providing career development services for their employees. However, the countries in these reviews indicate reluctance of the companies to invest in education and training of human talent, highlighting that often companies have organised their career development activities in accordance with their internal policies. In Viet Nam, the interviews of employers and employers' organisations show different approaches. On one hand, employers especially from big businesses invest a lot in their human resource division with some staff in charge of retraining and upskilling for their employees. On the other hand, some employers, while investing in the development of the employees, are still concerned about the turnover rate in their sector, for example, tourism has a high turnover rate (ILO, 2015) which prevents the employers from developing career development activities.

In **Armenia**, employers can be involved in the fields of general education and vocational education, and take part in implementation of various educational programs. In particular, activities with employers are an integral part of the career guidance system in high schools. Concrete participation in working environment provides students with an experience which corresponds to the current market requirements and the peculiarities and demands of the future market.

In the last decade, job fairs in Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia have become traditional. They are organized both by private organizations and by state funds through the SEA. Parallely career fairs and profession days are organized, where employers not only offer job vacancies, but master classes, motivation talks, trainings for students and their parents are being conducted. These trainings, motivation talks and other activities introduce the dynamic changes of the labour market, future trends and the demands of employers to the stakeholders. Such events are also carried out by sectors, when employers invite students to their organizations within their social responsibility.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

Nevertheless, there is evidence, that career development provides significant additional benefits for employers. According to OECD (2018) the employers' interest in career development relates to 1) recruitment, 2) staff development, 3) staff engagement and 4) corporate reputation. In order to make the co-operation with employers successful, career guidance providers need to reach out to enterprises through their employers, trade unions, professional associations and as individual volunteers. In turn, people in work need to engage with career development services. In **Viet Nam**, some business associations have established activities to promote both recruitment of prospective students in the field and upskill their current labour force.

In **Viet Nam**, industry business associations and professional associations have activities aimed at career development, for example, the establishment of HR clubs, or the Association's Training Committee to support members through training, skills improvement, or as the Association of Vocational Education and Social Work Profession in 2018-2019 also has a series of Career guidance workshops in conjunction with the Employment Department, but the activities are still no connection, lack of professionalism and consistency.

Some business associations are interested in career guidance such as Tourism associations in Quang Nam and Da Nang. They organise many career days for youth in tourism to appeal more young people to choose tourism for their career. In these activities, they provide workplace and vacancy information and sometimes their HR department interviews the students and the young people for them to understand what a real interview happens in business. Concerning career development, those associations normally have their human research clubs (HR clubs) in which they organise training for their members focusing on core and technical skills in tourism such as front office, F&B, homestay operation, etc.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021

In the reviewed countries, the trade unions have strengthened their role as a provider of career development services. In **Armenia**, the Confederation of Trade Unions recognises that the opportunity of having decent work is indispensable for the conditions of sustainable development in the country and has taken

more responsibility in supporting their members in career development.<sup>7</sup> In **Panama**, the trade unions are engaged in supporting young graduates to improve their professional skills in different fields.

In **Panama**, Sindicato Único Nacional de Trabajadores de la Construcción y Similares (SUNTRACS) has an agreement with educational institutions to ensure that workers complete their secondary education, which is financed by the trade union organisation. Upon obtaining a high school diploma, the unions link these workers to other training programmes.

This initiative aims to support those young graduates who did not have sufficient opportunities to obtain work experience before their technical baccalaureates. Those who manage to enter companies need to develop other skills to achieve good performance. In this regard, the National Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CONUSI) indicated that it is about to sign an agreement with National Institute of Vocational Training and Capacity Building for Human Development (INADEH), in order to improve specific skills in different fields. In order to identify training needs, they apply surveys and, based on the results, define the required courses. Companies do not usually participate in this process. They highlighted the experience of the construction sector in subjects such as masonry, construction, blueprint reading, in which they have been able to establish agreements with the companies to carry out the training at their headquarters, especially because it is difficult for the workers to travel to INADEH, due to time and resources. According to those interviewed, INADEH has mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning, so that workers do not have to repeat what they already know, but rather strengthen the gaps they have.

Source: National review report Panama, 2021

## New partnerships in the service delivery

There is a growing evidence, that no service provider or organisation can alone meet the needs of diverse client groups (e.g. Barnes et al., 2020). New forms of dynamics and relationships emerge at different levels of guidance, in working with clients, as a process between organisations, and in public policies in guidance (Nykänen et al., 2012). Transdisciplinary collaboration entails a shift from traditional expert services and established networks to a dynamic combination of independent and communal ways of working (Kettunen & Felt, 2020).

Several countries have developed one-stop centres for careers and employment advice and guidance and counselling, with services provided under one roof (OECD, 2004a, 2019a). Co-locating different public services under one roof, involving users and stakeholders in designing services and creating new forms of ‘public-private-people partnership’, the One-Stop Guidance Centre model reflects the ideas of New Public Governance (Osborn, 2006, 2010), with a strong focus on collaboration and horizontal ties between individuals and agencies. An example of this kind of centres was identified in **Moldova**, where the Education Code (2014), the article 130 stipulates that “the centres of career guidance and counselling have the mission to support pupils and students in the process of career planning and career education. These centres can be established by the local public administration authorities, the National Agency for Employment (NAE), education institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or private providers of such services<sup>8</sup>” Another form of cross-sectoral partnerships in Moldova is a toll free hotline for people with disabilities.

7 National Career Development Review, Armenia Report 2021.

8 National Career Development Review, Moldova, Interim Report 2021.

In **Moldova**, a toll-free hotline service for people with disabilities was launched in January 2017 as a national support service to offer assistance to people with disabilities who need protection, support and information. Starting with June 2019, Keystone Moldova manages the hotline service for persons with disabilities based on the contract signed with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection. The hotline number is anonymous, free and confidential and can be accessed from any landline or mobile telephone. It offers: on the phone informational assistance; phone counselling; multidisciplinary collaboration to solve the cases of rights violation; identification of suspected cases of rights violation of persons with disabilities and notification of the competent authorities and partner organizations; notifications of risk situations for life, safety and integrity of the persons with disabilities.



## 6. Governance of career development – coordination and cooperation mechanisms

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Coordination and cooperation across sectors with stakeholder involvement in career development help to overcome policy fragmentation, and duplication of effort, and to promote efficiency of investment in career development services and products (Cedefop, 2008).

Sustainable multi-level structure for governance of career development services consists of legislation, strategies, standards, monitoring, technical support and quality development which are provided/defined at central level with stakeholder involvement. At national level, strategic leadership refer to how policy and systems for LLG are managed in a country, region, and locality. It refers to co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms that implicate all relevant stakeholders in policy and systems development. (ELGPN, 2015). There are differences how countries or even regions within one country construct their career development services as a response to their national and local policy priorities. International evaluations (e.g. Watts, 2014a; OECD, 2004) suggest that there is no single model for career development systems and policies.

### National legal instruments on career development

As career development is a responsibility across different governmental sectors, national legislation can provide a basis for the development of a career development system and can be a tool to clarify jurisdictional responsibilities. However, in most countries, legislation for career development tends to be rather general and references to career development is included in legislation on education, vocational education and training and/or employment (Barnes et. al, 2020). This implies that career development can be perceived as a separate and with only marginal and supportive function of the main sectoral activities. If the legislation defines only the organisations in charge of the services, the continuum of the services from the user perspective might not be guaranteed.

An explicit status for career development can be reached as well if it is integrated in major legislation on education, vocational education and/or employment as a citizen entitlement for quality career guidance. The legislation can highlight the role of career development in supporting individuals in education, learning and employment. It can stipulate the nature, extent, frequency and quality of services or setting the services out as an entitlement for all, or for specific groups (Sultana, 2004). In the reviewed countries, the career development support services are fragmented across sectors and similarly references to career development are included separately in different sectoral legislations.

Legislation can also require government institutions and agencies to provide career development services, but only in very broad terms (OECD, 2004a; Sultana, 2004). The other option is to define the duties of staff members to deliver career guidance or career education for students in different level of education or within public employment services. In some countries, the professional competences and qualifications of staff members can be included in legislation that also describes the roles and responsibilities of the service providers career development can be regulated by several type of instruments. For example, in **Viet Nam**<sup>9</sup> the Prime Minister sets out Decisions which regulate career education activities in primary schools and high schools and require that schools need psychological counsellors and career counsellors for students.

In **Armenia**, according to Article 6 clauses 2 and 3 of the “RA Law on Education”, the Republic of Armenia, in cooperation with the social partners, ensures the development of the vocational education and training system in accordance with the needs of the labour market, guarantees free general education as well as vocational, secondary, higher, postgraduate professional education.

In **Viet Nam**, according to Education Law 2019 Article 27, “Secondary education should provide pupils with popular knowledge about technical issues, career guidance and the labour market....” Subsequently according to the Article 28 “the content of secondary education needs to ensure the popularity, comprehensiveness, career guidance and systemization....” In addition, the Employment Law regulates the activities of Public Employment Services (PES) centres and the use of unemployment insurance in vocational training for their clients.

Although there are no words in the Law mentioning either career development or career guidance, the article 5 of Decree 196/2013/ND-CP stipulates « the establishment and operation of employment service centres», which has the following tasks: Counselling on vocational training for employees on career selection, training level, and place to study in accordance with your abilities and aspirations. This Decree does not call the term “career development” for those whom have joined into labour market, but it is commonly understood that career development for those who have joined the labour market is a part of the service of PES centres.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

## National strategies or guidelines for career development

Another sustainable structure for governance can include national strategies (e.g. in **Armenia** and **Moldova**) and guidelines for career development with national cross-sectoral strategic leadership to follow-up the implementation. National career development strategies can establish a general framework for the services with measures for different stages of learning from early childhood to school and higher education, continuing/adult education and training. However, with sectoral objectives and budgets, coordination between government sectors can be challenging.

9 National Career Development Review, Viet Nam Report 2021.

In **Armenia**, according to the “Concept of the Development of Professional Orientation of the Republic of Armenia” the responsibility of national career guidance policies are shared by MMoLSA and MoESCS. In addition, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, as well as Ministry of High-Tech Industry have some involvement in the process and within the scope of their competences, provide necessary information for the development of methodology and service provision. The aim of this national strategy is to establish a model which can ensure lifetime opportunities for an efficient selection, change of professions and continuous career development for different age groups and persons in different social and work situations, considering each individual’s personal features, as well as the changing situation in the labour market demand. This joint cross-ministerial strategy with shared responsibilities of the service provision has provided an opportunity to avoid having the same services in different systems, to have one methodology source, to foster the regular provision of services in the formal education system and in social services out of education.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

In **Moldova**, the Strategy “Education 2020”, has a specific objective 1.10 with an aim to career development and guidance and establishment of a lifelong guidance system. The Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training (TVET), 2013-2020 included a specific objective no. 6 aiming to modernize the ways of presenting vocational guidance and career counseling and tools for general education and TVET schools, promoting emerging occupations (anticipating the demand of the labour market), increasing the social protection of youth with disabilities and from vulnerable families, promoting elective courses to stimulate the attractiveness of TVET. The anticipated results for this objective were: plans for vocational guidance and career counseling elaborated for general education schools; a monitoring mechanism in force; vocational guidance and career counselling material in the written press; making VET more accessible for youth with disabilities and from vulnerable families (support with accommodation, food, scholarships, support for employment, a better mobility for persons with disabilities in TVET institutions)

Source: National review report Moldova, 2021

## Designated national entities for career development

Coordination of career development services can be assigned to a national entity (e.g. in Armenia), which has a wide mandate for coordination skills and training policies. With a budget set aside for carrying out activities, this kind of entities can promote continuous professional development of career practitioners, collect national sustainable data to monitor the quality of services and to co-operate with a wide range of agencies and stakeholders in the service provision (OECD, 2021; Barnes et al., 2020).

In **Armenia**, the Professional Orientation and Capacity Development Centre (POCD), a branch of National Institute of Labour and Social Research is a national entity which has responsibility to establish and develop of unified lifelong career guidance system for all age groups and sectors in the country. The POCD Centre covers the coordination, provides professional orientation and career guidance methodology for all structures of the system, implements TOT and supervision of career specialists. The modules and methodology developed by the POCD Centre have been piloted in public schools, TVET institutions, universities, regional employment centres, orphanages, and child care centres. POCD Centre also provides trainings and consultation services to the specialists to ensure the stability and activeness of the professional orientation and career guidance system.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

## National career guidance forums or working groups

As an outcome in the reviewed countries, the validation meeting turned out to be a significant step in bringing together all relevant ministries, social partners and service providers from different sectors to share their views on career development practices and national policies. These meetings promoted further processes to examine options for more structured coordination and partnership in national career guidance policy development and service delivery (e.g. in Viet Nam). As ministries are organised differently in different countries, one attempt to formalise cooperation and collaboration amongst ministries and stakeholder groups is the establishment of sustainable working groups or national forum on career development. Within a national forum, it is possible to create a joint vision with subsequent actions for sectoral implementation. At the same time, the stakeholders can inform their own sector of the jointly agreed initiatives. However, the forum should have a clearly identified task, merely being a platform for dialogue and exchange of information may not be enough (see also ILO/ETF, 2021; Cedefop, 2008).

In **Viet Nam**, the validation meeting reflected the establishment of an apex coordination body or adding more tasks for the sub-committee of the National Council on Education and Human Resources to link career development to the certification or life-long learning initiatives. This new representative structure could promote the definition of national frameworks for quality, monitoring, evaluation and resource management. It would have a legal status to integrate career development in diverse policy field areas and initiatives (education, employment, TVET, WBL/apprenticeships, social protection, enterprise/productivity). Moreover, such a body could share initiatives between employment and education policies/ministries and coordinate diverse services, aiming at well integrated/coordinated delivery across different target groups or intervention stages. It also could help engage employers, workers or other civil society organisations for policy design and implementation and promote public-private partnerships for the development of infrastructure or setup/expansion of services in career development.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021

In addition to national forums or representative structures, many countries have established sustainable coordination mechanisms at local and regional levels. If a country has national strategies, the regional forums can coordinate local implementation of the policies. If the authority in career guidance related matters has been delegated from national to regional levels, the regional forums have more autonomy to design local priorities for the service delivery (Cedefop, 2008).





## 7. Funding mechanisms

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Achieving appropriate funding arrangements for career development activities guarantees a stable and quality provision of services in education, training and employment as well as incentives for enterprise-based activities.

Career development is both public good and private good and should be accessible to all individuals, independent of their activity status, gender or culture. Career development activities and products can be funded in a number of ways. In most countries, there is a stable dedicated public budget that is allocated for key career development activities. Funding strategies also attempt to pool resources from key stakeholders in a balanced manner and manage resulting funds in a transparent and accountable way. Well-developed systems channel funding and incentives to the most effective activities to support target groups and draw information from research and well established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (ILO/ETF, 2021).

The funding mechanisms in the four reviewed countries vary. Within fragmented service delivery it turned out that data on funding was not available. In cases where the state budget was limited the career development services were supported by external donors as well as by private and non-governmental organisations. The limitations of these organisations is that when the funding ends, they cannot maintain the existing career development activities that might have been implemented during the projects. **Moldova** and **Viet Nam** inform, that funding for career development is included in the government budgets for education and this makes it challenging to look at a coherent funding mechanism for career development. A common desire for all the four countries was to establish more sustainable financial basis for the career services.



## 8. Quality assurance and evidence base for career development

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Focus on quality assures comparability of career development support to citizens within and across the sectors with lifelong learning approach, regardless of the citizen's geographical, social and economic circumstances. It also ensures that funding for career development activities is well spent.

According to ILO and ETF (2021) sustaining quality of provision of career development services within a culture of continuing improvement increases service and system effectiveness, financial accountability, and transparency. Coherent quality assurance measures include (a) national standards such as competence frameworks for practitioners, (b) labour market intelligence and careers information, (c) monitoring and evaluation of services and d) continuous improvement of the system.

### National standards and competence framework for career practitioners

As career development services in many countries are shared responsibility of different sectors, differences exist in how individual countries construct their career guidance provision and define professionalism in the field. Governments, their agencies, professional associations, and initial trainers, and combinations of these, take different approaches to ensuring the relevance of career practitioner training. These differences reflect the national career guidance delivery and are connected with countries' legal, societal and cultural traditions, the current state of development of career services, and of the linkages between such services across sector (Jeong & McCarthy, 2017; Vuorinen & Kettunen, 2017). The description of job profiles is linked also to the organisation models or reforms in the career guidance provision.

A common challenge for all the four countries was that career teachers' role was focusing more on organising career education activities at school by group or by class, rather than providing career guidance for individuals. In addition, many career practitioners who were working in career guidance might have only a participation certification after a short course training without sufficient standards to certificates as professionals in career counselling and guidance.

According to the four country review reports, there are no explicit national competence frameworks or administrative regulations for career practitioners in the four reviewed countries. In **Viet Nam**, establishment of a competence framework was initiated by a social enterprise. **Moldova** has minimum quality standards for career development services which are provided by the National Employment Agency. The document has been approved by National Employment Agency and contains standards on people's access to career development services, organization and delivery of services, results of services provided but not explicit references to career practitioner qualifications or competences.

In **Viet Nam**, the Song An Social Enterprise has introduced a competency framework for the career counsellors, which is not still officially recognized by the government but this is the first-ever a competency framework for such kinds of jobs are produced in Viet Nam. This competence framework has been developed in cooperation with experts from APCDA, so it is equivalent with the international standards.

Source: National review report Viet Nam, 2021

If the practitioner competencies are not explicitly defined in national career development policies, a softer model to promote professionalism is the use of international, national or regional competency frameworks. The competence frameworks developed by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG, 2018) and the National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2009) provide a comprehensive overview of the knowledge, skills and awareness career practitioners need in the twenty-first century regardless of national contexts to deliver coherent and ethical career development services. The competencies provide also a foundation for identifying the contents of a curriculum that can inform the development of career guidance degree programs, references to teaching and learning methods, and references to assessment methods. Competence frameworks provide also a working tool to support the development of national quality frameworks for the overall service delivery (Vuorinen & Kettunen, 2017). Armenia informs that the POCD Centre has been using the IAEVG competence framework as a basis for the design of their training modules for career practitioners.<sup>10</sup>

## Labour market intelligence and careers information

High-quality career information is a fundamental requirement for young people and adults to steer their career paths in informed and strategic ways. It is likewise fundamental for career practitioners, teachers and trainers who support them in this regard. Careers information refers to any kind of information in any medium that assists citizens to make meaningful choices about learning and work opportunities. It includes information on occupations, the labour market, education, VET, higher education study programmes and pathways between these. The labour market (public and private employment services and employers) is a significant source of information on employment trends (supply and demand) in sectors and on emerging and dying occupations. Labour market information (LMI), transformed into careers information, is critical for informed career decision-making (ELGPN, 2015).

In Armenia, the Edu2Work platform was launched in 2018 by the Institute for Public Policy and National SDG Innovation Lab within the framework of the “From Education to Work” program. This tool will play an important role in career guidance for both students and parents. It may also be used by the policy makers and educational institutions, for example, MoLSA and MoESCS may follow statistics, and develop vocational training or employment support programs that will be needed in the labour market in the future. The platform analyses data from all online job websites that offer job vacancies in Armenia. It is a unique tool that contains the biggest data about the labour market of Armenia. The platform analyses vacancies, their requirements on qualifications, experience, skills and education. It is important that it allows to see the information for the whole year, making it possible to have forecasts for the coming months. The Edu2Work platform provides the broadest data on Armenian labour market demands and forecasts.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

<sup>10</sup> National Career Development Review, Armenia Report 2021.

The country reviews reveal that the lack of quality careers information is one weakness that prevents evidence-based system development in the four reviewed countries. In the absence of a comprehensive complete forecasting system in a country, the professionals can rely mainly on the statistical information provided by different researchers and materials provided by different authorities.

The Edu2Work platform in Armenia represents an emerging global trend for the establishment of national online single points of access to LMI (Moreno da Fonseca, & Chatzichristou, 2019). In many countries, LMI is collected and produced so that a range of stakeholders (at a national, regional and/or local level) can review the labour market and assess what may impact on the current situation in order to make an informed assessment of the future. This data can be used to support education and employment planning and policy, and inform careers guidance and counselling, therefore, feeding into systems and services that support individuals in their education, training and employment decisions (Barnes et al., 2020)

Labour market information alone is not sufficient within individuals' career decision-making processes and needs to be transformed into knowledge. Bimrose and Barnes (2010) distinguish labour market intelligence and define it as interpretation and adaptation of labour market information, which is being generated by the systematic collection, and analysis of different sources of labour market information. The career practitioners need also to be able to help their clients to develop some of the same skills that they need to develop for themselves to use LMI effectively — for example, choosing appropriately from a prodigious wealth and diversity of information sources (Bimrose & Barnes, 2010).

## Monitoring and evaluation of services

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential underpinning for good practice in career development, but establishing consistent monitoring and evaluation has proven difficult (ILO/ETF, 2021). In seeking to assess and measure the effectiveness of career development, it is crucial to understand and take account of the complex inter-relationships and variables that exist. These include the ways in which individuals vary in respect of their personal circumstances such as: gender, age, ethnicity and attainment; the contexts in which they operate also vary in relation to their domestic situation, geographical location, mobility and labour market status. The career intervention(s) individuals receive can vary extensively in terms of the intensity and duration of the intervention(s), the nature of their specific needs, the experience and training of the practitioner and the discreteness of provision (for instance, experienced as a specific activity or part of an integrated, on-going learning programme) (Barnes et al., 2020).

The countries reviewed share a gap in monitoring and evaluation of their career development support systems. The challenges are related to lack of updated information as well as to limited interoperability in collection, validation and analysis of the data from different sources. In Armenia the POCD Centre has a task force to enhance monitoring and evaluation of the services.

In **Armenia**, one of the tasks of the POCD Centre is to assist the career guidance service providers in developing their monitoring and evaluation systems. In 2021, career guidance units are systematically functioning in 96 public TVET institutions and there is at least one trained career specialist. In addition, in all institutions career guidance services are provided according to the methodology developed by the POCD Centre.

Monitoring of the TVET institutions' Career Units activities was implemented in February-March 2018 and in November-December 2019, jointly by POCD Centre and MoESCS, and was aimed at identification of both the nature and the content of the services provided by those units to the beneficiaries and the number of students using the career services.

In 2018, 83 TVET institutions from 102 participated in the monitoring implementing by POCD Centre. Visits were organized by the POCD Centre specialist. The engagement of students in career guidance services was monitored according to a national questionnaire. The results show that there were 7,693 graduating students, out of which 3,950 received Career Guidance services.

Source: National review report Armenia, 2021

## Continuous improvement of the system

Having a reliable evidence base on the effectiveness of career guidance interventions is a pre-requisite for justification of public expenditure on services. Coherent evidence-base provides a rationale how funding is allocated to different delivery channels and priority groups. Sustainable monitoring can be enhanced by means of collaborative partnerships among end-users of the services, researchers, practitioners delivering services and developers of career development services. It is also important to strike a sustainable balance between the costs of establishing monitoring measures and the costs of delivering career development services, especially during a time of decreasing public resources (Arnkil et.al., 2017).

Quality Assurance and evidence base for career development could be improved by increased knowledge exchange and tripartite social dialogue. A crucial element in generating evidence is to select what to monitor rather than what is easy to measure. For example, the first element of any report monitoring a career development service needs to be documentation, ensuring that the services were implemented as designed. Having in place an efficient quality assurance and evidence base structure, would allow for better coordination with all related stakeholders and to have a career guidance system that matches the interest of all, especially these of young entrants to the labour market. The POCD Centre in **Armenia** has been collecting data on employers, involvement of trainers, the satisfaction level of students and technical equipment of service providers. This data has been presented as an indication of continuous improvement of the national career guidance systems by showing the improved quality of the services provided by the Career Guidance Units in VET institutions.<sup>11</sup>



## 9. Measures to enable and enhance access to career development services

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Accessible career development services are non-discriminatory responsive to individual needs/preferences and context and provide a service which can be tailored to individuals and employs adequate methodologies, tools and language to respond to those needs and preferences.

The ILO and ETF (2021) emphasize that widespread access to career development services, activities, tools and resources supports equality of citizen opportunity, social equity, social mobility and social cohesion. This implies that individuals of all ages, independently of gender, culture, socioeconomic status or geographic location have access to relevant services and measures.

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<sup>11</sup> National Career Development Review, Armenia Report 2021.

According to the country reviews, widespread access is identified as one of the priorities in career development. For example, in **Moldova** the quality standards for the career development services defined by the National Employment Agency (ANOFM) note that the access to career development services is free, unconditional, and accessible to all categories of jobseekers, including people registered as unemployed in the territorial subdivisions. At the same time, students have access to career development services. Jobseekers, including those registered as unemployed, benefit free of charge from career development services, offered individually, in groups, in seminars, meetings with successful people from different professional fields, depending on the activities planned.<sup>12</sup>

The country reviews note that often the access to career development services is limited because the majority of the career education and career activities take place within different level of education. Another challenge in widespread access is the imbalance between urban and rural areas in the country. In the absence of publicly funded career development the families do not necessarily have the opportunity to pay for relevant counselling services. In addition, the workers in the informal economy do not necessarily have access to sufficient career development support.

In practice, the models and interventions in career development services are influenced by the career theory of the theories the service providers use (Sampson, 2008). Theories influence the career development services through the design and use of assessments, guidance processes and the availability of information and instructional resources (Sampson, 2008). During the last decades, the models for career development have shifted from singular matching exercises into activities which are connected to lifelong development processes (Patton & McMahon, 2014; Kettunen, 2017).

In addition to theories, a common denominator for the design of career development services is the time available for career interventions. Often the funding that is available for career development services is limited and there are expectations from policy makers that the existing funding should be use as cost-effectively as possible (OECD, 2004a). The effective design and use of career development services is a collaborative effort among service providers from different government sectors, so it is important to have a common understanding among collaborating partners of the purpose and strategies for evaluation and accountability of the services. Considering the cost-effectiveness of career development services is essential as more individuals seek assistance with their career development. The Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach provides a theoretical framework how to have a balance on the supply and demand as a from social justice issue (Sampson, 2008).

The aim of the CIP-based differentiated career development service model (e.g. Sampson et al., 2004) is to provide the right resource, used by the right person with the right level of support, at the lowest possible cost (Sampson, 2008). The differentiated service delivery approach emphasis the importance of screening the readiness for individual career decision making and subsequently distinguishing self-help services, brief staff-assisted services, and individual case-managed services. According to this approach individuals' level of readiness for decision making can be categorised as high medium or low. Self-help services which include self-assessment and career information with little or no assistance from staff can be used by individuals with high level of readiness for decision making. Brief staff-assisted services involve practitioner-guided use of resources for individuals or groups with moderate readiness for career decision making. Individual case managed services are provided to individuals with low readiness for career decision making. The differentiated service model can be applied in both on-site and online career services (Sampson, 2008). The use of CIP approach illustrates how a career development theory influences the amount of time required to deliver and supervise career interventions and the resulting impact on the supply of career interventions in relation to the demand (Sampson, 2008).

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12 National Career Development Review, Moldova, Interim Report 2021.



## 10. Digital and distance services

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Technology has great potential for balancing self-help and staff assisted services for citizens thus allowing widespread access and the maintenance of equity in service provision in a cost-effective way.

As there is strong evidence that demand for career development services far exceeds supply, there is a growing consensus that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays increasingly important role in the provision of career development services (e.g. Cedefop, 2011; Eurobarometer, 2014; European Council, 2004, 2008; ILO, 2006; OECD, 2004a). As the emerging technology has widen opportunities how people explore and acquire information about occupational, educational, training and employment opportunities, there is a pressing need to align career development services and associated professional practices more closely with these new technologies (e.g. Bimrose, Barnes, & Atwell, 2010; Kettunen, 2017; Sampson & Osborn, 2014).

In a national career development system, ICT refers to the products, infrastructure and electronic content that support lifelong guidance policy and service delivery. These interactive services, resources and tools are designed and developed for citizens, and their use in turn informs their design. This highlights the need for practitioners and users of career services to have adequate and appropriate digital competencies to exploit the potential of ICT in a career development context (ELGPN, 2015).

The four reviewed countries vary in ways how technology is used in national career development systems. One shared challenge is connected to the limited access to equipment and internet connections for citizens and organisations. Like in many countries, the use of technology in career development has emerged with an aim to support the traditional career services by publishing online institutional, local or national educational and occupational information (Kettunen, 2017). This is still the most common use of technology in career development and guidance.

In **Moldova**, The e-Career (<https://ecariera.usm.md>) is an electronic educational platform, designed by the Moldova State University, based on a research on the use of ICT in career guidance (Cotruta, 2020) and scientifically grounded on the DOTS model (Watts et al., 1996). It addresses mainly high school and university students as well as all those interested in designing a quality vocational route in relation to the individual potential, as well as in the educational services of the university. It contains sections as: self-knowledge (vocational interests, aspirations and values, decisional styles, career anchors, etc.); career decision; vocational marketing (preparing a CV, a letter of intention, an admission portfolio, etc.); career planning (synthesis of testing, career planning). It also includes information regarding: the training programs available at career guidance centre, volunteering and internship programs or available jobs. The e-Career is available free of charge at: <https://ecariera.usm.md>

Source: National review report Moldova, 2021



# 11. Services gaps, untapped potentials and opportunities

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## Impact on COVID-19 Pandemic to career development services

In the spring 2020, The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of technology in career development services. According to the joint international survey in the impact of the pandemic (Cedefop, 2020), the career development services were transferred mainly online during the lockdown. In general, services were for the most part successfully adapted, although especially highly individualised activities, such as counselling were dramatically reduced. With vulnerable groups, telephone support appeared to have more relevance in helping to combat inequalities in access. Although practitioners expressed positive attitude in applying technology, there was an increased demand for various kinds of support (e.g. training, financial, material, online practice, resources) for practitioners.

Although the four reviewed countries informed about the shift to online service delivery, the barriers for effective transformation were related to lack of motivation of students, unavailability of internet connection and digital devices, as well as absence of necessary materials that could be used in distance learning. In **Armenia**, as one response to increased need, the MoESCS in cooperation with POCD Centre developed virtual career education lessons, which were broadcasted on public television. Later on, the POCD Centre has been conducting online trainings and self-assessment tools to identify students' abilities and professional interests. The ILO **Viet Nam** produced one free application of career guidance for 14-19 years old that could be free download from AppleStore and GoogleStore and during this COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers of more than 1370 users. Although this Apps only provides the assessment and testing activities with a list of occupations, this shows a quite emerging need of using the digital based services. The interviews of career counsellors show that since the pandemic, more career education and counselling sessions was organised on the digital platform and work well with a certain number of participants.

## Challenges

In the four reviewed countries, career development is acknowledged as a shared policy responsibility across the fields of education, training, youth, employment and social affairs policy. The services tend to be located in schools, vocational education, higher education, adult education, employment and youth services. A remaining challenge is how to promote construction of pathways across these sectors as a continuum and link career development services with lifelong learning and skills strategies. This would require a joint vision and a strategy for career development, particularly in decentralised administrations or in contexts without legislation for career development, as service providers have often considerable autonomy in how they deliver and organise career development services for their users.

A typical challenge in establishing coordinated career development services is an overall lack of shared understanding among policy makers and stakeholders of the primary purpose of these services, operation of the services and their desirable outcomes. Countries vary in their degree of centralisation and sectors can have different structures and specific mandates based on regulations defining their funding, methods and responsibilities (ILO/ETF, 2021). These four reviewed countries vary widely in the extent to which legislation is used to steer LLG services (see also Barnes et al, 2020; Cedefop, 2011). Little coherence between services and contexts may lead to competition rather than a coordinated, quality



service. Challenges were connected to differences in the operating cultures between different sectors responsible for (e.g. between education, employment, youth, social and health). However, the validation meetings in the review process indicated the willingness amongst key sectors and stakeholders to work together.

The importance and utility of career development is generally acknowledged in the four reviewed countries. However, the consistent assessment and evaluation of resource usage and results was not always possible due to absence of standardised monitoring of input, processes and outcomes. This does not provide a solid base and rationale for the sustainability and continuous improvement of the services. This may lead to fragmentation, general low quality of provision, low labour market and learning relevance as well as unethical treatment and/or discrimination (see also ILO/ETF, 2021). Like in many other countries, monitoring the outcomes need more attention within a context where services and public spending needs to be justified.

One of the challenges to develop an appropriate career development system at a national level is the lack of accurate and relevant national labour information. In addition to issues linked to the gathering, production and dissemination of data and intelligence, a common problem in the reviewed four countries is that LMI tends to be weakly integrated in career development processes (see also ILO/ETF, 2021). There is also a need to exploit the potential of technological developments and integrate their use more systematically into all aspects of service delivery. Technology has the potential to act as an integrative factor in career development policy if ministries and agencies that share responsibility for career services have a commonly agreed on framework for the role and use of technology and communicate this to service providers and stakeholders.

In the four reviewed countries demand for career development services among different user groups exceeds the supply of services. Participation to career development activities is often linked to the social background of the individuals and there are differences in widespread access between urban and rural areas. These factors may lead to inequitable outcomes. Especially, during the Covid19-pandemic the career practitioners have been under pressure to guarantee access to career development services and faced the sudden change to provide the services at distance. The crisis has exposed the need for training of practitioners in the use of modern technology, but also on the mindsets of practitioners to enhance the paradigm shift related to promotion of lifelong career management skills (see also Cedefop, 2020). Given the lack of binding legislation or national quality frameworks for guidance in most countries, practitioners need a stronger emphasis on strategic competencies that enable them to define their new role and tasks within different settings.

Increasing familiarity with ICT and social media is placing new demands on career practitioners and organisations in which they work. Adequate training should be provided in order to help practitioners to feel confident and competent in their work which facilitates successful integration of ICT into practice. In meeting the needs of those who are less familiar with this technology, the policies need to recognize the differences in digital literacy and integrate the use of ICT in ongoing career education where individuals can develop skills on how to use online services and how to be present in social media (see Kettunen, 2017).

The policies on career development vary across the four reviewed countries because of differences in societal, economic and political contexts. In designing national career development systems there is no single or optimal solution that fits all the countries. The policy makers need to make choices, which take into account the national context, or local conditions and the financial resources which are available. There is a need to develop follow-up and monitoring methods that combine both qualitative and the quantitative approach. As a result, structured national reviews of the services and follow-up of the methods used make the career development services more visible and the data that is collected enables a dialogue between the individuals, practitioners and policy makers.



## 12. Priority areas of intervention – general recommendations

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This report examined recent progress in career development practices and policies in three countries (Moldova, Panama and Viet Nam) which conducted national reviews of career development systems and applying the ILO model of a Theory of Change for career development support systems. Armenia was applying partly the review model in compiling their national information. The reviews were conducted from the perspective of lifelong learning and in the context of changing labour markets and skills requirements. On one hand, the reviews presented examples of well-functioning career guidance practices in the countries. On the other hand, the reviews identified remaining challenges and gaps in the service provision and policy development. The following recommendations are drawn from the findings of these reviews.

### Delivery of career development services

With young people facing increasing difficulties in making decisions how to prepare for the labour market and with fears about uncertain future, job polarisation and job losses (ILO, 2021), it is increasingly important that individuals have adequate skills to negotiate multiple transitions they will face throughout their learning and employment journey. Employer engagement with career development is vital in developing career development pathways for workers within and across organisations. The added value of career development for enterprises is connected to better skills utilisation and more stable competitive position.

- ▶ As national variations exist to what extent or students can have direct exposure to the world of work. It is recommended that countries develop a framework that outlines the career management skills individuals need to effectively manage their learning and work-choices in a lifelong learning perspective.
- ▶ The acquisition of career management skills should be seamlessly integrated in formal education and training either as specialised education or as cross-curricular competences
- ▶ As participation in career guidance activities is often linked to the social background of learners, it is necessary to integrate career education in curricula as a continuum from primary school to further education.
- ▶ To promote correspondence between workers skills and enterprises skills demand it is recommended to link career development to skills governance, to individual and enterprise-learning investments in cooperation with social partners.

### Coordination and cooperation

Career development is at the heart of lifelong learning and skills development systems. As career development is shared responsibility across the education, training, youth, employment and social affairs policy fields, coordination and cooperation contribute to the continuity and coherence of the services. Coordination and cooperation help to overcome policy fragmentation and promote the efficiency of investments in career development services and products.

- ▶ With a view to improve the profile and status of career development support system it is recommended to connect career development to national lifelong learning or skills strategies and to set out citizens' entitlement for career development in education or employment legislation.
- ▶ To avoid fragmentation in both policy development and career guidance provision, national strategic leadership is needed to promote efficient investments public and private partnership in career development services and products
- ▶ To avoid duplication of efforts and avoid gaps in the service provision it is recommended to examine options for representative structures with stakeholder involvement to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation in both policy development and service delivery.

## Funding

National and regional funding allocated to career development is often uncoordinated and may create duplication of efforts and lower the long-term impact of the overall service provision. A stable funding for career development is fundamental to promote employability of youth and adults.

- ▶ Stable public budget should be allocated to career development support systems, on basis of appropriate accountability.
- ▶ To enhance the diversity of funding sources it is recommended that enterprises participate in the funding of career development via contribution to employment and training funds

## Quality assurance

Using evidence from the career development practice and policy development is essential. There is a need to improve the monitoring of the inputs and outcomes career development, with involvement of representatives from education, employment, youth, social partners and the research community. National reviews of the services and follow-up of the methods used can make the career development services more visible and the data that is collected enables a dialogue between the individuals, practitioners and policy makers.

- ▶ Stable budget should be allocated to a sustainable entity or a consultative body which can collect and share consistent data on career development to support quality assurance and the development guidance services across the sectors in employment, education and training.
- ▶ National descriptions of core and specialist competences in career development work should be established with involvement of all relevant actors including career practitioners.

## Access

The policies on career development vary across countries because of differences in societal, economic and political contexts. The policy makers need to make choices, which take into account the national context, or local conditions and the financial recourses which are available.

- ▶ As career development services are often established in different levels of education, for specific cohorts or targeted groups, more holistic and seamless model should be established with integrative use of technology and stronger coordination and collaboration between service providers.
- ▶ More equal opportunities for people of all ages should be provided through multi-channelled (both online and on-site) career development services.
- ▶ Outreach initiatives should be established to reach rural populations and vulnerable groups outside education, training and active labour market measures.
- ▶ Career development should be more available at workplaces in cooperation with public and private service providers

### Use of technology

Given the diversity of career development services in different countries and different settings it is important that policy makers participate in international co-operation in the development of structured common reference points for mutual policy learning and are willing to share knowledge on national, regional and local levels. More consistency and more systematic cooperation between government sectors is needed to create a well-functioning digital ecosystem for career development. The integration of technology to career development services should progress in accordance with the overall transformation of the services in bringing together the key features of the national career development system.

- ▶ A common vision amongst stakeholders, leadership support and a strategic path for the implementation of new technologies in career development should be ensured at the national level.
- ▶ Real time labour market information and forecasts should be better utilised in career guidance to support individuals, education and training providers and career development services.
- ▶ To leverage the potential of ICT in career development, the digital skills of individuals and those engaged in career guidance work need to be enhanced.



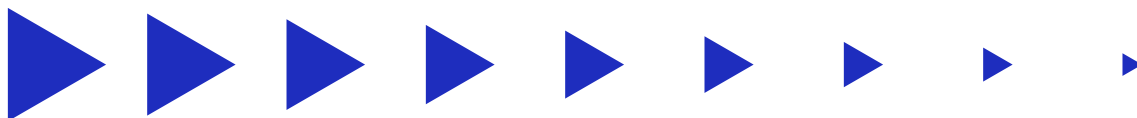
## 13. Conclusions

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The national reviews played an important role in raising awareness regarding the key role of career development policies and career development delivery models in addressing the challenges posed by the development of labour markets, such as digitalisation, globalisation, demographic changes, climate change and other global disruptions. The reviews have shown the importance of career development from early mandatory education through adulthood onwards. They have identified individuals, families, communities, organisations and wider society as beneficiaries of quality career services through impacts on educational, economic and social outcomes.

The reviews have brought together user groups, service providers, stakeholders and policy makers to generate insights onto pathways to national system development. Structured system descriptions, comprehensive data collection, interviews with stakeholders and validation of data enable the participating countries to benchmark their progress in the career guidance practice and policy development against other comparable countries and to share good practice and promote subsequent mutual policy learning. The engagement in data collection and validation workshops with policy makers, stakeholders, service providers and user groups can be used as first steps for further more structured dialogue for system and policy development.

These reviews are building on the experiences of past international and European efforts to construct national career development systems and policies. The ILO and European Training foundation have proposed to continue international cooperation in conducting further national reviews on career development practices and policies and to initiate a process which can be adapted to any context, including low and middle income countries (ILO/ETF, 2021). The aim is to facilitate the development as a participative process and create an evidence base on further development of coherent career development services for all in accordance with local contexts and conditions. The review process aims to promote a socially just framework that encourages and empowering social approach based on shared responsibilities rather than allocating the full responsibility for the individuals. The long term goal is to rethink and strengthen links between career development, lifelong learning to better ensure quality education outcomes, economic outcomes, and social outcomes.



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