

Leading career development services into an uncertain future: Ensuring access, integration and innovation

Country paper: .Singapore [Insert country name]

In advance of the symposium all attending countries are asked to produce a country paper setting out the key issues for their countries in relation to the key themes of the conference.

Please use this template to enter your information. You should aim to be concise. Use bullet points and links rather than providing a lot of local detail. **The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length.**

How to submit:

- Download the Country Paper Template, save this on your computer.
- Prepare the country paper based on consultation within the country team and preferably with relevant national authorities and information sources.
- Submit the Country Paper by sending it to jmc@iccdpp.org (John Mc Carthy, director ICCDPP)
- Deadline: **31st of January**

If you have questions concerning the country paper, please contact John Mc Carthy (jmc@iccdpp.org)

Background information

1. List all of the members of your country team with their organisation.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ms Sing Chee Wong (Leader)
People and Career Development Association (Singapore)2. Ms Dawn Pang
Employment and Employability Institute |
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2. What are the key aims your country has for participating in this symposium?

1. To learn and share new information on career development, and how it is practised in different countries
2. To have a better understanding on how career development is promoted and advocated in other countries
3. To build network and establish contact with other career professionals
4. To liaise with career development associations in other countries for mutual benefits and exchanges



Theme #1 - Context and challenges for career development policy.

In your country...

3. Is the level of policy interest in career development:

- Growing?
- Shrinking?
- Staying about the same?

Comment

Career development was only recently introduced in Singapore. Due to the economic, technological and social changes taking place in Singapore, career development has been given much emphasis by the authorities concerned. Some of the initiatives taken by Singapore Government to equip Singaporeans and Singapore Permanent Residents (PRs) to cope with these changes include the following:

1. Educating the people to understand the economic, social and technological changes taking place in Singapore and globally, eg, emerging skills, jobs, and job trends; employment prospects of workers; employers' challenges and their expectations of workers; workers' need for lifelong learning and skills upgrading/re-skilling. The knowledge would facilitate career planning and career decision-making for both students and adults.
2. Charting Industry Transformation Map (ITM) to take an integrated approach where trade associations and chambers (TACs), companies, and the Government work together to help identified sectors prepare for the future. It comprises detailed skills frameworks, new initiatives, and future opportunities to guide various industries towards job creation and output targets.

3. Developing the SkillsFuture framework which is a national effort to help Singaporeans develop skills relevant to the future, and build a future based on the mastery of skills in every job. It includes an integrated system of education and training to provide all Singaporeans with enhanced opportunities to acquire greater skills proficiency.

4. Establishing a network of Career Coaches and Education and Career Guidance (ECG) Counsellor to guide and coach students and working adults in their career planning and development.

4. What are the key political, social, economic and technological issues that are likely to have an impact on people's lives and careers in your country?

Give up to five of the most important issues as you see them.

1	<p>Singapore is championing the 4th Industrial Revolution as its economy is very much related and dependent on it. It is a smart nation, and the use of technology has significantly impacted people's lives, work, and careers.</p> <p>Its labour force must therefore be adequately equipped through lifelong learning, re-skilling, and upgrading of skills to meet the technological advancement and changes, and economic demands. This is especially necessary since Singapore's main and only asset is human capital.</p>
2	<p>Singapore has a low unemployment rate of about 2-3 %, and workers often felt assured about their employment, and inclined to be complacent about learning new skills. They may not perceive the need for career development. Structural unemployment will hit hard on the unprepared workers.</p>
3	<p>Singapore's population is aging rapidly due to reduced birth rate, hence it is necessary to encourage older people to continue working and augment the labour force, especially when they are healthy and can be economically active. Their participation is important to sustain the dwindling work force.</p> <p>Students need to be better prepared for the working world, especially with regards to their career planning and development.</p> <p>There is also the social- emergence of the new millennium work force whose workstyles and values differ from the more traditional workers. Bridging the gap between the older and younger workers is necessary and helpful for a more expedient and productive labour force.</p>
4	<p>Singapore wants to be an inclusive society, and to provide opportunities for the elderly, physically and mentally disabled, and other disadvantaged citizens to have the dignity of being economically active people, capable of contributing towards the economy.</p>
5	<p>Due to globalization, the competition for jobs has shifted, from one largely restricted within clearly defined national boundaries (e.g. Singapore) to a global auction open to competition across borders. There is greater mobility of Singaporean moving out to work in other countries, and the influx of foreign talents wanting to work in Singapore.</p> <p>The movement has impacted the social and cultural fabric of the Singapore society.</p>

5. What roles do career development programmes and services play in addressing these political, social, economic and technological challenges?

Career development programmes are required to help workers identify suitable careers, especially if it is necessary for them to change their career paths. Career coaches also help workers by providing career advice and guidance regarding emerging job trends, re-skilling and/or upgrading of skills, as well as engagement in lifelong learning so that they could be relevant for changing market demands. This is especially necessary since technological changes have impacted Singapore's economy and labour force significantly.

Some people require career coaching assistance to motivate and encourage them to join the labour force, eg the elderly, and those with disability(s). They could also benefit from advice on job search skills like resume writing, job interviews, and job applications.

School and tertiary institution students could benefit from career guidance to help them identify suitable majors, and to prepare them for work and careers after they have completed their studies

Career programmes include building network of opportunities with employers, locally or across national boundaries, virtual or physical, to ensure working and learning opportunities for Singaporean workers



Theme #2 - Aims for, and access to, career development

In your country...

6. What are the key policy aims for career development programmes and services?

The key policy aims for career development programmes and services are as follows:

- 1) To provide suitable programmes and services to guide and coach students and workers so that they could be confident about their career direction, and acquire appropriate skills and competencies to build an adaptable and competent workforce.
- 2) To introduce policies and programmes that would support mid-career switchers due to economic and technological changes and challenges. It includes providing support to employers to hire these workers who need to adapt to new careers and jobs
- 3) To establish tripartite and equitable agreements and arrangements among the Singapore Government, workers, and trade unions to accelerate labour force development

4) To initiate special programmes for the development of formerly marginalised group of people so that they would receive appropriate training and could join the labour force

7. What groups of people can access career development programmes and services and what groups are excluded?

All Singapore citizens and Permanent Residents are eligible to have access to these services and programmes, and benefit from them according to their needs. Workers of foreign nationalities who are working in Singapore on employment passes are not eligible to participate in the programmes and services.

8. How are the opinions of citizens and service users heard and incorporated into policy and practice?

Workforce Singapore (WSG), a statutory board of the Ministry of Manpower, is the main programme developer of the initiatives. They work closely with the relevant stakeholders to refine any changes to the programmes and services offered, and/or create new initiatives for the benefit of all those concerned.

Singaporeans and Permanent Residents can also give feedback and voice their opinions through their meetings with Members of Parliament; focus group meetings that are conducted regularly among different sectors of the population; professional associations; trade unions; and social media like newspapers, on- line forums, etc.

9. Is there a framework for ethical practice in career development? How does this framework balance the interests of the individual with the demands of policy and signals from the labour market?

The People and Career Development Association (Singapore) has developed the national code of ethics to guide the conduct of career practitioners, and as a framework for ethical practice in career development. Another association, the Career Development Association of Singapore has also developed a code of ethics for use by career practitioners in Singapore.

These associations whose members work as career practitioners in Singapore, or who are interested in career development, play an advocacy role to represent their members' interests to the demands of policy and signals from the labour market.



Theme #3 – Integrating career development into wider society.

In your country...

10. Which ministries or jurisdictions are responsible for career development programmes and services? Clarify what programmes and services each ministry or jurisdiction has responsibility for.

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM), and its statutory boards, Workforce Singapore (WSG), and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), together with the Ministry of Education (MOE) are mainly responsible for Singapore's career development programmes and services.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for career programmes and services offered to students in the educational institutions through its Education and Counselling and Guidance (ECG) Department, and counsellors.

The Workforce Singapore promotes the development, competitiveness, inclusiveness, and employability of all levels of the workforce through its various initiatives, programmes, and services. It oversees the transformation of the local workforce and industries to meet ongoing economic challenges.

Its key focus is to help workers meet their career aspirations and secure quality jobs at different stages of life, as well as addresses the needs of business owners and companies by providing support to enable manpower-lean enterprises to remain competitive.

The SkillsFuture Singapore is a national movement to provide Singaporeans with opportunities to develop their fullest potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points; and takes care and monitors the national training programmes, including the disbursement of funds to training providers and incentives to learners/training programmes participants.

(for more information, please see <http://www.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/about.html>)

Workforce Singapore and the Employment and Employability Institute (an initiative of the National Trade Union Congress) operate career centres for all Singaporeans and Permanent Residents

(for more information, please see: <https://e2i.com.sg/about-e2i/corporate-information/>;
<http://www.wsg.gov.sg/careersconnect.html>)

11. What leadership, co-ordination and collaboration approaches exist within the career development system to ensure collaboration across different sectors and different types of clients. For example, how are career development systems within the education system connected to those within employment, health and youth work?

The Singapore Government, usually represented by the Workforce Singapore, takes the lead in creating and establishing national programmes. Government- funded agencies like the Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), Government-appointed Career Matching Providers, and other relevant stakeholders work closely with the Government/Workforce Singapore to promote and execute national programmes through various platforms, and reach out to relevant agencies/beneficiaries through their databases of stakeholders.

Working committees are formed for special projects. They comprise relevant stake holders and representatives from various departments, ministries and organisations that would be implementing these projects.

Since different agencies/organisations serve specific target audiences (eg students, working adults, people with special needs, etc) according to their areas of service and specialisation, the need for coordination and collaboration may not be so crucial at this moment. The respective agencies are usually able to reach out and serve their target audience readily.

Periodic reviews and reports submitted to the relevant government agencies ensure efforts are well implemented and used among the agencies/organisations.

Workforce Singapore is responsible for conducting national career development training programmes for all career practitioners and advocates in Singapore.

12. What are the main challenges to leadership in the field and the main obstacles to effective collaboration?

As career development is relatively new in Singapore, its concepts and aims may not be fully understood by the different stakeholders. This may give rise to different perceptions of what could or need to be done. More discussions and education on the matter would help

13. What kind of cooperation (if any) is there between the career development services and stakeholders like employers, trade unions, the media, NGOs, professional organisations etc?

Currently the Workforce Singapore is the main provider of career services, together with other service providers like the Ministry of Education, and Employment and Employability Institute. These organisations work closely with the other stakeholders, according to needs, and their clientele groups.

For example, employers are encouraged to participate in different schemes like Workpro, Career Support Programme (CSP), Professional Conversion Programme (PCP), etc, to promote employability of workers and their respective staff expansion activities. Agencies like the Employment and Employability Institute, trade unions, NGOs, professional associations, and media help to advocate the benefits of these schemes to both job seekers and employers.

(please see <http://www.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/programmes-and-initiatives.html> for more information on the schemes)

14. How is the professionalism of career development workers developed and maintained whilst working with other professionals?

Workforce Singapore, Employment and Employability Institute, and associations organise conferences, Community of Practice events, talks, webinars and training programmes to develop the professionalism of career development workers.

Career practitioners also have competency-based credentialing frameworks that enable them to chart their own professional development. The aim is to facilitate capability- building and technical expertise to ensure deeper and broader competency development among career professionals.

Career Development associations like the People and Career Development Association (PCDA) (Singapore) accept members who are career practitioners as well as those not in this profession, eg Human Resource personnel, teachers, occupational therapists, etc. but interested in career development. Through the Association's events, members from the different professions exchange views and gain better understanding of career development practices for their own professional development. Several agencies also offer services that involve multi-faceted disciplines like career services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and social work. Examples of such agency is SG Enable and SPD; student care services, etc. (please see <https://sgenable.sg> and <https://www.spd.org.sg>)

Plans are underway for career professionals to work more closely with employers and Human Resource personnel to enhance talent management in companies and organisations.

15. Do other types of professionals (e.g. teachers and social workers) deliver career development? How is a professional service ensured?

Yes, other types of professionals also deliver career development assistance to their students/clients. They usually provide the initial level of career development assistance. If more complex assistance is required, the clients are referred to the career coaches at various career centres.

Currently, Workforce Singapore conducts "Career Advocates Programmes" for people who are not career practitioners, but advocate for career development in their respective roles. The National Code of Ethics for Career Practitioners is taught in this Programme.

Members of the People and Career Development Association (PCDA) (Singapore) who may be from different professions and who offer career guidance assistance, are expected to adhere to its Code of Ethics for Career Practitioners.

However, there is no strict monitoring currently to ensure that the Code of Ethics is upheld.



Theme #4 - Leading innovative change for the future.

In your country...

16. What are the key innovations or ways that career development programmes and services have changed over the last 10 years? This could include changes relating to technology, practice, management and governance and the use of new theories and evidence.

Although career development is at a nascent stage in Singapore, nevertheless there is a discernible shift from traditional practices like one-to-one coaching to using technological resources like Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics to facilitate self awareness, career exploration and job applications. This is related to Singapore being a smart nation, and the change in types of clientele seeking career assistance in Singapore. Previously, more blue collar workers sought assistance for lower level employment opportunities. But presently, more Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs) are seeking career planning and development services, and more specialised types of jobs. Hence the manner in which career services are delivered have also changed accordingly, eg greater use of technology to serve better- educated and more sophisticated clientele.

There are several online portals developed on the national level to facilitate self awareness, job search and applications. They were custom-built for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, taking into consideration Singapore culture and labour market situation.

Attempts are also made to reach out to the targetted groups like the job seekers, retirees, housewives, etc by setting up satellite career centres in neighbourhoods. This is supplemented by large -sized vehicles that have been converted to become mobile career centres to better serve the target populations.

17. How do national policies and initiatives, where they exist, ensure and support the development of innovation in career development services provision?

Currently the innovation in career development services is very much related, and/or the result of national policies and initiatives, spearheaded by Workforce Singapore working with other stakeholders.

Efforts are also made to visit and study innovative practices elsewhere, and adopt them for Singapore's use where feasible. Funds are made available for these innovations

18. What new, innovative and promising interventions in career development programmes and services is your country planning for the future? How are such innovations making the most of open data initiatives, online technologies, artificial intelligence and other forms of innovation?

Singapore is a smart nation, and there is an ongoing digital revolution, and advancements in digital technologies transforming the way Singaporeans live, work and play, including provision of career development programmes and services.

Artificial intelligence, data initiatives and various online technologies are readily available to enhance self awareness, career exploration, and job applications. Two national online portals, My SkillsFuture (to promote self awareness) and My CareerFuture portal (to facilitate job search) are available to all Singaporeans and Permanent Residents for their career planning and development needs.

(Please see <https://www.myskillsfuture.sg> and <https://www.mycareersfuture.sg>,
<http://www.labourbeat.org/future-worker-4-0/> and
https://www.ntuc.org.sg/wps/portal/up2/home/news/mediareleases/mediareleasesdetails?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/Content_Library/ntuc/home/about%20ntuc/newsroom/media%20releases/699c44d8-126b-4e55-a255-27f340460dc0)

19. How is the training and continuing professional development (CPD) of careers professionals encouraging innovation and taking account of new evidence as well as changes in technology and the labour market?

Career professionals are very aware of the technological changes taking place in Singapore and its determination to be a smart nation. Webinars and other forms of on-line training are common and well-accepted by the career professionals for training and CPD purposes.

They would also not hesitate to refer their clients to go to on-line portals and websites for career planning and development, job openings, training and other career-related services.

Final reflections

20. Is there anything else that you could like to address through participating in this symposium?

We would like the following to be addressed:

1. How should career professionals work with Human Resource personnel in talent acquisition and management? Is it possible to dovetail these two areas of services? If so, How?
2. Are there companies/industries that could be used as models to show how these two professions have worked/complemented each other successfully?

3. How to work more meaningfully alongside with other professionals to promote better mutual understanding so that clients could be assisted more holistically on their career and other needs.
4. Some employers may be more profit-driven and do not understand or perceive the need of career planning and development for their staff as immediate gains, or change the current HR practice. How should career practitioners work with such employers and get their buy-in?
5. Similarly, how to get the buy-in from some trade unions who may incline to perceive career development in a rather negative light.