

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

Country paper: Norway

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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2. What are the key aims your country has for participating in this symposium?

Norway has put skills policy, and more specific, career guidance, higher up on the agenda during the last years. Several initiatives and developments are taking place at the same time. To participate in this symposium, is an excellent opportunity for the team to meet colleagues from all over the world to learn, exchange and discuss matters concerning this important policy area. And also we host the Symposium.



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

During the last years we have seen a substantial move forward in the career guidance policy development in Norway. The common aim is to strengthen the quality, but also to strengthen the access across all sectors.

Two major assignments from the Ministry of Education and Labour is an example of this increased interest:

In 2019 Skills Norway will complete the development of a national, cross sectoral, quality framework. The process includes all stakeholders, and the aim is that the framework can serve as a tool for quality development and for governance.

The quality framework will consist of four elements:

- An ethical framework for career guidance
- Competency standards
- A model for career learning
- Quality assurance mechanisms

The Ministry for Education and Research has also given Skills Norway an assignment to lead the development of a national digital career guidance service in close collaboration with The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The goal is to develop both a national careers website and an e-guidance-service.

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	The Norwegian labour market has experienced continuous reorganization over the last decades. In the coming years technological advances, climate change, globalisation, changes in industrial structures, immigration and aging of the population will affect skills needs in all areas of employment. The rapid changes in technology and working life imply increased need for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance. Traditional jobs are disappearing, new jobs occurring, which means a need for new/other skills in the adult workforce and need for adjustments in the education sector to make sure young people get relevant education. The green shift: Norway's economy is oil-based. Due to the green shift, there will be a pressure to make structural changes in a sector employing a lot of people.
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2	The Norwegian labour market combines a high level of productivity with high employment rates and learning intensity. We have a high demand for a formally skilled work force. It is therefore more challenging to get a stable job without any formal education in Norway.
3	Age wave: a drastic increase in the elderly population. An expensive welfare state must be financed by a smaller workforce, and there is a greater demand for employees with competence related to health issues for the ageing population.
4	During the past decade, the rate of employment of the population has decreased. The decline has been most pronounced among young men and for those with little formal education. In the highly productive Norwegian labour market there are high skills requirements for entering into and remaining in employment. Many people with disabilities may also have incomplete qualifications, adding to the challenge of getting into the labour market. Being on the outside of the labour market also contributes to lower participation in learning activities.
5	Immigration: Immigrants are in need of upskilling before they can be fully integrated in the labour market. The skills level and the need for training vary greatly among immigrants in Norway. There is a need to recognise and utilise immigrants' skills, and provide opportunities for education. Many immigrants with high skills find it challenging to obtain recognition or complete their education in Norway. Other groups of immigrants have little formal education, little work experience and do not meet the requirements of the labour market in Norway. These groups, need to receive training in basic skills and/or education and Norwegian language.

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

In the Norwegian skills policy, lifelong guidance has been pointed out as one of the solutions to challenges in a changing Norwegian society. Lifelong guidance is aimed at strengthening the individual's ability and opportunity to make well informed choices that can gain both themselves and the society. Career guidance and career learning in school and higher education may help young people to gain career competence and strengthen their ability to make choices and cope with different transitions. It can prevent school drop-out and stimulate young people to make career plans that are more in line with the future of the labour market. Career guidance can also help adults to manoeuvre in a changing labour market, meet new skills demands, take well informed choices and manage multiple transitions throughout their career. Career guidance can also contribute to promote lifelong learning and mobility so that people stay employable. Career guidance can help improve labour market attachment for immigrants. Skills profiling and career guidance also help to enable refugees to put their existing skills and work experience to use at an earlier stage.



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?

- Develop a high-quality lifelong guidance system
- Improve the career guidance services to meet the needs and demands of the population when it comes to both quality and access
- Develop a cross sectorial national quality framework for the public career guidance services
- Strengthen the public career centres to provide access to free of charge career guidance services for all adults
- Establish a national *digital* career guidance service, including a high quality e-guidance service
- Develop the career guidance services, including career learning opportunities, in schools
- Widen access to career guidance for refugees and immigrants

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

Pupils in lower and upper secondary school are legally entitled to individual career guidance. Pupils in lower secondary also have a compulsory career learning programme called “educational choice”. Apart from this, no other groups are entitled to career guidance in Norway. But there are different career guidance services available in the different sectors, that people might have access to: Most of the higher education institutions have some kind of career services. Unemployed can get access to career guidance through the public employment sector. Some refugees have access to career guidance at the reception centre where they live. Besides this, we have established one cross sectorial career guidance service: the career centres in the counties. They give access to free of charge career guidance services for all adults over the age of 19. The national digital career service, which will include an e-guidance service, will give access to career guidance for all, regardless of age. It will start up in 2020.

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

It varies a lot if the use or the quality of career guidance services are monitored or evaluated. A challenge is that career guidance often is a part of other services, and thus not defined as an independent area of monitoring. Career guidance in schools is partly monitored in some larger school quality surveys, and there are some user surveys given to pupils. Skills Norway are

responsible for a user survey at the regional career centres for adults. The career centres use the feedback to improve their services. The e-guidance service will also conduct different user surveys. Apart from this, there has been conducted various research and evaluations of the services in different sectors, where in various degree the user perspective is incorporated. The National forum for lifelong guidance consists of representatives from user organisations in addition to representatives from public administration on three levels, careers services, social partners and the Norwegian professional guidance association. The forum meets twice a year and discusses ongoing national processes concerning career guidance policies.

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?

Is there a framework for ethical practice in career development?

There are several ethical standards/frameworks that has been developed:

The Norwegian Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance has developed ethical standards for guidance in schools.

The organisation “Career Service in Higher Education” have developed ethical standards for the individual career guidance.

The county career centres have developed ethical standards, this was done in cooperation between Skills Norway and the county career centres.

The National quality framework that Skills Norway is currently developing, will consist of a framework for ethical practice. The framework is made to be applicable across sectors. The framework consists of a set of ethical standards, as well as different resources to stimulate the development of ethical practice in career guidance in all sectors.

How does this framework balance the interests of the individual with the demands of policy and signals from the labour market?

(The answer below is related to the ethical framework developed as part of the national quality framework):

The ethical framework that is being developed as part of The National quality framework is developed to ensure ethical conduct in career guidance for individuals and groups. Career guidance is a service given in many different sectors, and the practitioner must always consider rules, regulations and ethical standards that is specific for the sector. Sometimes the practitioner might experience that these rules and regulations are in conflict with the interest of the individual, and the practitioner might experience this as an ethical dilemma. In the newly developed ethical framework, one has tried to bring this kind of dilemmas in front and make them explicit as ethical challenges the practitioner, as well as those in charge of the service, must relate to and find ways to deal with. The ethical framework therefore includes a so called “Frame for ethical practice”. The frame points at four dimensions/contextual conditions that might challenge the possibility to ethical conduct when career guidance is given in a specific sector. It is illustrated like this:



The contextual conditions pointed out in the frame as relevant to consider to assure ethical conduct are:

- 1) Organization
- 2) §: laws, rules, regulations
- 3) society and surroundings (e.g. demands of policy and labour market)
- 4) target group

The main aim is to bring forward a stronger awareness of the possible tensions and dilemmas that always is present where career guidance is conducted. As one knows, an ethical dilemma is characterised by the fact that no solution is perfect. The idea with the “ethical frame” is that you are more likely to deal with the dilemma in the best possible way, if you, and those in charge, are aware of it.



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.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the career guidance services in in schools (all levels), higher education, adult education and for refugees and immigrants

The Ministry for Labour and Welfare is responsible for career guidance services in the Public Employment Sector

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?

Skills Norway is given the assignment by the Ministry of Education and Research, to serve as a national co-ordinator for lifelong guidance in Norway. The task is to promote a cross sectorial focus and stimulate cooperation and the development of a more comprehensive lifelong guidance system.

Major focus points:

- Cooperation and coordination in the lifelong guidance system
- Strengthening and developing the regional partnerships and the Career Centres
- Promote blended guidance and digital career guidance service
- Strengthening the evidence base
- Quality development and quality assurance

Skills Norway is chairing a *National Forum for Lifelong Guidance* with representatives from all stakeholders. The forum consists of approximately 30 different stakeholders and they meet twice a year. The Forum is established to secure information flow and to promote communication between stakeholders when it comes to career guidance.

Skills Norway is also chairing a *National Coordination Group* at directorate level, which is set up to share information and coordinate policy development and implementation in the different sectors.

In the counties there are so called *Regional partnerships for career guidance*. Their main aim is to strengthen cooperation between the different providers of career guidance services and relevant stakeholders. The goal of a partnership is also to strengthen the quality and widen the access to career guidance. The Regional partnerships are involved in the Regional Career Centres where guidance services are offered to adults regarding both education and work. These centres also play an important part in strengthening the quality and professionalism of the counselling offered in schools and in the Public Employment Services (PES). The centres will be involved in the e-guidance service that is currently being developed.

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

At national level it is a challenge that there are two different ministries (The Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry for Labour and Welfare) and four different directorates (The Directorate for Education and Training, The Directorate of Labour and Welfare, Directorate of Integration and Diversity and Skills Norway) that (in different ways) are involved and in charge of career guidance services.

Coordination within and between different counties, sectors and levels constitutes a major challenge. Consequently, there is a lack of coherence regarding lifelong service provision (OECD Skills Action Report Norway 2014). Equal access and quality assurance are also major challenges. There has so far not been any shared quality framework to promote this - but that is now under way. There is a somewhat heterogeneous understandings of what career guidance is, and what should be the outcomes of career guidance, undermining the potential for concerted efforts towards shared objectives.

Even though Skills Norway has been given the task to serve as a national coordinator in the field of career guidance, the directorate does not have a mandate to instruct and can primarily achieve its objectives through the use of “soft power” and gaining other actors’ consent to making changes.

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?

Norway has developed a so-called *National Skills Strategy*, signed by 5 ministries and 8 of the main social partners focusing, among other themes, on the importance of enabling people to make well informed educational and work-life choices. The strategy points at the importance of a well-developed career guidance system that gives adult access to career guidance. A *National Skills Committee* and a *Skills Board* are established. Amongst other tasks, they are working on developing a better system for gathering, analysing and communicating labour market information/information about future skills needs. The project will focus on how to ensure that these analyses of future skills needs, are made available for career guidance practitioners and end-users in a way that is understandable and useful to them.

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

The Masters programme in career guidance is designed to be relevant for practitioners in all sectors. The students are recruited from a variety of sectors and work-places. This stimulates cooperation and gives the students' knowledge about how career guidance is taking place in other sectors. This can also stimulate a clearer and more common professional identity amongst the students.

The regional partnerships have been given a role in developing and stimulating career guidance practitioner's professionalization and is focused on practitioners in schools and PES. The task is often given to the county career centres.

The upcoming quality framework has identified a holistic set of competency standards that different stakeholders may utilize to ensure that the career guidance staff a cross sectors meets the necessary professional requirements.

There are several conferences and network meetings every year, both at national and county level, that gather practitioners from different sectors to meet, get to know each other and discuss common matters.

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

The community of practitioners in career guidance is characterised by a diversity in educational and professional background. A wide range of different professionals are in various degrees and ways involved in delivering career guidance services in the different sectors. For example: In secondary school the program "Educational choice" is often taught by teachers with a pedagogical background. In PES practitioners with background as social workers may deliver career guidance.



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.

- In the first decade after 2000, there was a lot of focus on widening access and strengthening coordination and cooperation. Based on a regional partnerships-model in the counties, local career guidance services were established (the career centres), as well as local coordination and cooperation mechanisms. After a few years, Skills Norway was designated as a national coordinator. This was at the time seen as innovation in public sector and the model has been important for the development of lifelong guidance in Norway.

- Skills Norway has an assignment to lead the development of a national, cross sectoral, quality framework. The process includes all stakeholders, and the aim is to make the framework a tool for both quality developments, quality assurance and for government. The development of the framework calls for quite a lot of innovation, especially because it is expected to be relevant across sectors.

- The development of a national digital career guidance service, including an e-guidance service is an innovative project. It involves both innovation when it comes to technical solutions, the content and the organisational models chosen for operating the service.

The project is informed by the Norwegian e-Government programme that has been pursuing a widespread programme of digitalisation of public services. This agenda seeks to establish a range of principles that will underpin the role of digital technologies in Norway's public sector and is affecting career services as well.

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

An additional aim for the national digital career guidance service, apart from widening access to information and guidance, is to stimulate the development of more blended guidance in the different career guidance services in all sectors in Norway.

The development of the regional partnerships and the county career centres was an innovation that emerged after the recommendations given by the OECD and the country reports made at the beginning of 2000. The counties were given quite a lot freedom to choose different solutions and local innovation was stimulated. This has resulted in a structure with career centres that are somewhat different in how they are organized and the different services and programmes they offer also varies. This has enriched the career guidance delivery in Norway.

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?

New, innovative and promising:

- The establishing of a national digital career guidance service, including an e-guidance service and different digital tools made to be relevant for end-users as well as for practitioners.
- The development of an online platform to gather and promote information and resources when it comes to continuing and further education. This is to be relevant both for end-users, career guidance practitioners, employers and the educational institutions.
- Some of the regional career centres are in a wider range starting to use and promote online services like chat, video-chat and online courses.
- Over the last two years Norway has developed and tried out a new system for giving newly arrived refugees career guidance early in their stay at reception centres. Under way is also an attempt to make career learning a compulsory part of the programme for immigrants who have received a permission to stay and have been assigned a municipality to live in. It is yet to be planned how, if decided, this will be implemented in the municipalities.

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?

The higher education sector is quite autonomous in Norway and there is no tradition for the government to directly influence the content of the educational programmes for career practitioners. There is a continuous informal dialogue initiated by the Master programme between the programme and relevant actors/stakeholders, to ensure that the programme is in line with the recent developments both in the field of career guidance and in the society. The higher education institutions that deliver career guidance programmes, have proven to be quite innovative when it comes to designing new programmes that meet new needs for professional development. The Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences has started up the first HE – programme in “Blended guidance – integrating technology into career guidance”. The University of South-Eastern Norway are developing a programme connected to career guidance for immigrants.

Final reflections

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