

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

## Country paper: the Netherlands

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](mailto:jmc@iccdpp.org) (John Mc Carthy, director ICCDPP)
- Deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> of January**

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

## Background information

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

Elize de Bar	<u>UWV</u> (Employee Insurance Agency) autonomous administrative authority commissioned by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW))
Thea van den Boom	<u>Ministry of Education, Culture and Science</u> (OCW)
Karien Coppens	<u>Euroguidance Netherlands</u>
Ester Leibbrand	<u>Noloc</u> (the Dutch association for career professionals and job coaches in the private market)
Jouke Post	<u>Saxion</u> / <u>James</u>
Marianne Zoetmulder	<u>Leerwerkloketten</u> (Regional Service centers on education and work)

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

Policy of the ministry OCW is to strengthen career education and guidance (LOB) policy and practice within secondary schools and colleges and in support of Lifelong Learning (LLL)/Development of all citizens. Career learning and guidance within the general and vocational schools is mandatory and needs improvement. The newly coordinated policy for LLL is ambitious and needs support of career guidance ([letter to Parliament 27-9-2018](#)).

The government wants to achieve a breakthrough in the field of Lifelong Development (LLL) and create a positive and strong learning culture. The broad lines of the approach to achieve this breakthrough can be found in the letter to Parliament. Several departments will cooperate closely to achieve the aims formulated in this letter. Leading departments are the ministries of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) and of Education, Culture and Science (OCW). They cooperate also closely with social partners, private parties, and Training and Development Funds (O&O fondsen).

Given this context, our key aims are:

- to learn from and be inspired by (best) practices and policy developments in other countries on issues such as: access to career guidance; infrastructure of guidance services; policies and measures concerning quality assurance of career guidance services (both public and private); cooperation of stakeholders in providing services; quality assurance of policy-issues (responsibility, financially, level of coordination).
- bring more synergy in our national vision on career development;
- join forces to create a more profound and comprehensive movement to promote the importance of career development in the policy debate.



### 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

The policy interest in career development is growing. Due to the tight labour market, there is an urgent need for personnel. At the same time, there is a considerable untapped labour market potential (1.1 million). How do we get enough (trained) staff and how can we prevent the creation of new unused labour potential? In addition, there is an urgent need to make employees and employers aware of the labour demands in the future.

There is a growing awareness that lifelong career development and guidance is crucial to prepare workers for the complex future of the labour market (e.g. skills mismatch and technological disruption) and to achieve the ambitious goals set within the LLL area.

In addition, the public policy in Dutch education is aimed at improving the presence and quality of career education (developing career management skills) and guidance within the secondary and vocational educational programmes and there is an ambitious three-year agenda for improving the guidance of pupils and students.

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	Technological developments, flexibilisation, and globalisation: The pace of technological innovation, global competition, 'smart data' and so on, and their impact on tasks, jobs, company structures, connectivity, working environments, work-life balance, careers and therefore on education and finding, getting and keeping a job.
2	Growing political awareness and attention, and larger budgets for LLL and career development issues. Combined with the (neo)liberal vision of most politicians and recent Dutch governments towards the delivery of career services and guidance (free market forces, fragmentation and decentralization of policy arrangements) and often short-term thinking /recurring cycles.
3	Social inequality and growing unequal chances in education and on the labour market: the (economic and sociological) fact that careers are mostly distributed unequally and that people's chances are not the same. Yet, transitions will always take place, perspectives become more career centred than job focused, and responsibility is increasingly placed with the individual. Therefore, there should be activities reaching out to those who are not at first interested in learning and training, vulnerable people should be able to get assistance during transitions in education and into/on the labour market, and 'non-vulnerable' people should be able to get assistance during vulnerable transition periods in education and the labour market.
4	The changing spirit of times: growing awareness of an upcoming crises, of the uncertainty of the labour market and of the flexibility needed, uncertainty about retirement, more flexible relations In the labour market, having two jobs at the same time, focus more on happiness than on money and power, the combination of work and care for elders/others, wish to be in control of one's own guidance. These mentality changes call for a budget and/or vouchers for individual training and guidance, e-guidance, competence scans, valuing previously acquired competencies, better training and educational possibilities for adults.
5	Demographic and social developments such as aging, migrants, refugees, low levels of basic skills, labour shortages, and unused labour potential, require strong and effective regional partnerships.

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

In essence, career development programmes and services should enable people to pave their own way through complex situations and developments and should be a provision for as many people as possible.

They should help and assist people to gain insight, determine perspective, and create chances and opportunities.

The programmes and services should provide information, advice and coaching concerning labour market issues and on training and educational possibilities (specific training programmes, training institutes, or training projects), outreaching services, validation of skills, and multichannel services. Furthermore, they should promote and stimulate cohesion between the educational and labour market parties and address decision makers. Experts take the stand that focus should be less on incidental 'information and advice' and more focus on providing citizens with the tools to guide themselves through career and life. These career management skills should be learned already in early education.



## 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?

Career education (to acquire career management skills) and career guidance are essential to support people in their lives, their careers, during transitions, and to empower (vulnerable) citizens enabling them to manage their life and career(decisions). Career education and guidance are also essential in preventing (ineffective) dropout and switches in education, offering alternative study paths, motivating students in their study, and helping unemployed (learning/matching jobs).

Focusing on adults, key policy aims are:

- Prepare the adult population for the demands and difficulties of the present and future labour market;
- Create sustainable employability and a healthy working population that is able to work till 67;
- Create an inclusive labour market based on equity where everybody has the possibility to engage in work and learning and gets the support they need (for example, stimulate groups who seem to have fewer options than others, such as the 45+ group, the un- or low-skilled working population, people who face physical or mental disabilities (also related to the so-called Participation law (Participatiewet) or refugees);
- Support, promote and stimulate public and private institutions (such as educational and labour market parties) to collaborate on effective and professional career service.

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

In education, students in general secondary education and (pre)vocational education and training have a legal right to career education and guidance delivered within the schools by teachers, tutors, mentors, and career guidance specialists.

There are national websites with career information and information for a broad audience (youngsters/adults/unemployed/employed people).

Career advice and guidance are also offered by public employment services and public Regional Service centers on education and work (although low in capacity of services). Also, the private market is active in career services for people of all ages (both via organisations and to private individuals).

Working people with collective labour agreement and social plans, and people who are entitled to unemployment benefits and people with social assistance labels can access guidance programmes and services.

Access could be improved for:

- The group of people younger than 45 years.
- People with a disability, migrants, people with low basic skills, and people with a reluctance/resistance to education.
- Employed people who want to invest in their career, especially self-employed people and people on flexible contracts (who often don't have access to career guidance or do not have the means to participate in education or training).

In general, the range of career development and guidance programmes and services offered on an institutional base is fragmented and regionalized. Furthermore, each domain – secondary education, vocational education, the labour market – have their own system and network. As a consequence, accessibility differs per group and setting.

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

The opinions of citizens and service users are heard via panels, internet consultation on new legislation and regulations, by mandatory student and parent participation in secondary education, by evaluations of pilots/projects/policy, by customer satisfaction surveys, by monitoring improvements through the inspectorate, and through regular feedback from students on this issue and special monitoring of for example the career guidance agenda's in education. Policies in the area of the labour market are also evaluated.

The question is whether this is sufficient (for example there is 'a loud cry' for guidance for the lower skilled), also since most of the people are not concerned themselves. Relevant professional guidance organisations, such as Noloc (Dutch professional association for career professionals and job coaches) or OVAL (sector organisation for career guidance), could play a role in giving a voice to these groups.

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?

There are two frameworks: 1) the employers delivering careers services have a code of ethics and quality assurance and 2) the two Dutch associations for careers professionals (Noloc and CMI) have a code of ethics for individual professionals (code of conduct). This code focuses on which rules (in accordance with policy demands ) members/professionals should follow in their professional practice, but does not touch upon the balance between the interests of the individual and the demands of policy and signals from the labour market, nor are public and private interests being monitored by these frameworks. Furthermore, this code is not explicitly accepted by policymakers, nor do public services professionals and teachers receive sufficient instruction on this matter (there is no ethical framework for school staff nor for the professional associations nor is there any mention of ethical issues in teachers' code).



**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 Social Affairs and Employment and the public employment services (UWV Werkbedrijf) are responsible for career development programmes and services in the labour market, such as career advice in the post-initial phase, development advice for 45+, re-integration budgets for people with disabilities.

Career education and guidance in education is the main responsibility of the ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

However, there are a lot of stakeholders involved in policy and practise of LLL, and career guidance programmes and services (such as municipalities, employers and trade unions).

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?

In the regions there is a cooperation between schools, colleges, and the learning and working offices / Regional Service centres on education and work (this service centre programme is a partnership between the PES, municipalities, and vocational schools). Also in the field of vocational education there is a close cooperation between the VET-schools and the labour market by SBB (the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market). There is also close cooperation in specific areas with shortages on the labour market such as the Technology Pact and the Care Pact. Furthermore, in the guidance of vulnerable clients, there is a close collaboration between student/employee, employer, education, the PES, and a job coach.

However, services to the adult labour force are very fragmented: there are a large number of 'players' in the field and they all have to compete with each other and find their own resources/financing (e.g., trade unions with their career professionals; career professionals with their own practice; temporary employment agencies; PES; companies with their own (internal) career services; reintegration agencies with job coaches). In a first attempt to connect a number of these initiatives, Noloc and CMI have recently taken a joint initiative to create a Human Capital Expertise Center, focused on careers in transition.

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

Main challenges are:

- There is not one single party that has the lead in policy-making in the entire domain of career development and guidance. So many parties with sometimes opposite interests (such as: government, municipalities, education, social partners, branches and sectors) have to cooperate, integrate, overcome their differences and try to work together to make a better regional and professional delivery of careers services possible. Thus, the biggest challenge seems to be working together on the bigger picture.
- No shared vision/policy on has been established.

- The importance of career guidance, the need to invest in cooperation, improve free access, customize guidance and improve and ensure quality is not yet or only recently recognised in all policy fields. The national policy improvement programme on Lifelong Development which started in 2018 focuses on improvement in these areas.

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?

Both on a national and regional level these kinds of cooperation exists. In 2016 a cooperation between social partners, PES, municipalities, and the education & development funds of the industries was stimulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (DWSRA-pilots) to support adequate services for unemployed and to prevent unemployment. Furthermore, thanks to the 2018 LLL policy, contact and cooperation is growing on a national/policy level.

Regionally these kinds of cooperation differ quite a lot. In certain areas where there is labour market shortage there is close cooperation (Care pact, Technical pact), but also in the Regional Service centres on education and work and VET schools cooperation can be close (for instance, concerning career information or tutoring). However, cooperation sometimes only exists on a basic level or on paper, and is not (fully) operationalised.

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

The Regional Services centres on education and work stimulate professionalism of guidance professionals whilst working with others. Furthermore, there is strong sense of urgency within the professionalism of career development to work together with other professionals. They are invited by the organisation for professionals (Noloc) to different projects and work together in think tanks.

However, the education and training of career experts/guidance professionals in general is a point of improvement / attention. For example, there are no programmes on career education and guidance in the initial phase of teacher training. Training of educational staff in career learning is limited. Career teachers may be member of the professional organisation NVS-NVL or VvSL. Professional training in career guidance on higher education level is limited. The profession is not protected, and professionals in the private market are voluntarily member of Noloc.

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

Yes, teachers and tutors may also be involved (though not all teachers). Schools increasingly facilitate training programmes/courses in career education and guidance for them, yet this is usually on a voluntary basis.



**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.

The career guidance services were privatised in the '80-90s. The public services/services within secondary education and VET colleges have been there since the '60s and became mandatory as of August 2000. Until 2008 there was a public facility which provided information and advice to all jobseekers, including those with a job. This facility disappeared in 2009 and the focus shifted to the benefit recipients of the public employment services (PES). Due to major cutbacks, the PES could hardly offer any more personal services and these services were therefore digitised. Over the past two years, a shift has become visible and a larger budget has come available for the PES to give career advice to benefit recipients in personal interviews. The Regional Service centres for education and work also offer opportunities for a wider target group. Furthermore, in education, CEG incentive programmes on career education and guidance have been offered in recent years by sectoral organisations (VO-raad and MBO-raad) and schools re supported by the Career Guidance Expert Centre for general and vocational education and training, Euroguidance and other organisations such as SBB.

Most important innovations:

- the importance of market-driven policy agreements (more freelance professionals (ZZP) with a small private practice)
- the professionalization of the career sector (Noloc)
- the (cautious) emergence of evidence-based practice
- the Master Career Management of the Open University (in cooperation with Noloc)
- e-guidance and data-driven services.

The impact of ICT on the delivery and content of career services: customer data provide more direct insight into customer behaviour and customer profile without (only) being dependent on data from back-office processes. It is used in real time services and communication with the individual customer. Insight into the customer profile and possible interventions at any time. Insight in who the customer is, what can the customer do himself, what is the job market perspective, what does the customer do, what does the customer think, what interventions can we give the customer?

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

Innovation is supported by the government by stimulating projects/expertise for implementation. Also, on a national level there is the agreement for improvement of career education and guidance in general secondary education and VET schools and college, which is supported by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and Social Affairs and Employment (SZW). Furthermore, in the LLL plan these ministries work together in developing a regional infrastructure for career guidance (pilots learning/working offices). However, besides an interdepartmental work force, there isn't a national institute or body responsible for national policies, initiatives, or innovations in provisions. Nor is there a national institute or body responsible for education for and training of career counsellors (there are main players such as Noloc, Oval, and the Universities (of Applied Sciences), but no 'leaders').



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?

There are many new innovative programmes, concerning the match at the labour market, or with educational needs in mind, which are developed by private organisations. Furthermore, innovation is supported by the government by stimulating projects/expertise for implementation.

- Research is being conducted on career-checks ('loopbaan-apk's), that will give information on how these checks should be conducted and what are the key ingredients of a good and effective career-check where Labour Market Information (LMI) is being used to inform people on their future possibilities and opportunities.

- Within an international Erasmus+ project a lifelong digital portfolio instrument has been developed (cozima – make competences visible). Cozima uses the EVP, EVC, and the ECVET methodology to highlight the competences and skills of these young adults on the EQF level 1 and 2. It has functionalities which exceed the mere “making visible” of competences: It can include, depict, reflect, present, verify and validate the learning biography and competences – acquired formally, informally and non-formally – of the target group. It can be used for applications, job search, career counseling, self-reflection, motivation and finding and monitoring goals. Moreover, it can be used as a tool for transition management, especially for the transition from schools for special education to the mainstream schools and colleges, vocational training or the labour/ job market.

- Noloc is a leading partner in two international Erasmus+ Projects, one of them focusing on improving the implementation of quality assurance for career professionals and the other on developing a curriculum for career professionals and job coaches in order to better suit actual guidance practices to the needs and personal circumstances of those who are lower skilled or lower qualified. Furthermore, Noloc was involved in an Erasmus+ project in which a European quality standard for job coach education programmes was developed. The content was based on the content already existing in the Netherlands for job coach education.

- Innovative projects on skills mismatch, e.g. House of Skills in Amsterdam. In the Netherlands, the region of Amsterdam has established a network of organizations, called 'The House of Skills'. In this network the local and regional government, together with employers, trade unions, career guidance institutes, PES, higher and vocational education and private institutions aim to develop innovative ways of 'meeting the skills mismatch' on a regional scale. A specific set of pilots in The House of Skills aims to innovate the matching routines of partners in the network by searching for and experimenting with a digital and data-driven skills- or competency-based approach.

- Innovation is also being realized by stimulating the development of individual learning accounts/personal budgets for learning. In short: people have an individual account, where they can deposit money from their employers. The individual 'owns' this account and can spend his money on career related subjects, to enhance his employability.

- Within the LLL plan different parties also work together in developing a regional infrastructure for career guidance and pilots are being implemented.

- Trade unions are also working on a proposition to deliver their existing career services on a regional scale;

- Development of e-guidance services on national and regional level

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 training and CDP of staff involved in (educational) career services and career professionals in the private market can be improved, including innovation, using new evidence, and changes in technology and the labour market. However, there are professional magazines, for instance 'LoopbaanVisie', aimed at career professionals and 'Bij de Les' and 'DecaZine' for career teachers, which provide access to these matters.

Training and development is not mandatory for staff involved in (educational) career services or career professionals in general, and happens on a voluntary basis. However, it is a mandatory aspect of the recertification process of those career professionals who are qualified to use the quality marks of Noloc and CMI.

## Final reflections

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

- Learn about policies/financial impacts and evidence-based good practises concerning building a sustainable infrastructure for career guidance services for all citizens.
- Gain insight in how other countries implement the public learning account. How are they designed, who has access, how is the budget paid? In short: what are the conditions and who implements the scheme?
- Learn about quality standards used innovations in CG and how to assure the quality/expertise of professionals (education and training CG experts/certify issues);
- Learn and share information on recent developments regarding the initial and CDP of careers professionals in education, public services, and the private market.
- Gain insight in how other countries combine e-guidance with face to face guidance services.
- Learning about career learning, developing career management skills competences in education and labour market (students, adults in companies)
- Learn what initiatives other countries are taking to identify and involve more or less forgotten groups in the labour market (e.g. people early retirement).