



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

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From IAEVG

Guidance in
Changing World

From around
the World

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear IAEVG Members and Colleagues,

As 2025 draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on a year that has been both intense and rewarding for our community— a year of meaningful progress built through our collective efforts.

What stands out most, looking back, is the spirit of this community. Across every continent, we see practitioners, researchers, and policymakers committed to supporting people in navigating learning, work, and life — strengthening the quality and impact of guidance in diverse contexts.. Not because it is easy, but because it matters.

November brought us Global Careers Month, and what an extraordinary month it was. Across continents and time zones, our members and partners organised events, workshops, and conversations that reached countless individuals. From local seminars in small communities to international webinars connecting practitioners across borders, we demonstrated that career guidance is truly a worldwide movement. I am grateful to everyone who contributed — whether by hosting an event, participating in discussions, or simply spreading the word.

The year also brought important progress within IAEVG itself. We completed the first comprehensive revision of our Ethical Guidelines since 2017, now published and thoughtfully addressing the realities of artificial intelligence and digital technologies. This was an opportunity to reaffirm our values and clarify what ethical practice means in a rapidly changing landscape.

Our membership has grown in both numbers and geographical reach, now spanning across 51 countries. Our core publications and communication channels have also evolved: the International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IJEVG) continues to perform strongly, and the successful launch of the IAEVG Magazine in its new format has created a lively platform for sharing practice and perspectives across regions.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our Board members, volunteers, partners and every individual IAEVG member who contributes to our mission. Your dedication, expertise, and generosity of spirit make IAEVG what it is. I also extend my gratitude to our partners at the Inter-Agency Working Group on Career Guidance (IAG WGCG), comprising of Cedefop, the European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO and World Bank and beyond.

As we enter the new year, I invite you to carry forward the momentum we have built. Share your knowledge. Support a colleague. Speak up for the value of guidance in your community. Together, we can ensure that educational, vocational and career guidance remains a force for human flourishing in a changing world.

I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful end to the year and a prosperous New Year.

Warm greetings,
Jaana Kettunen

President of IAEVG
president@iaevg.com

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to this issue of the IAEVG Magazine, devoted to the theme of guidance in a changing world. The pace of transformation—technological, demographic, economic, and social—continues to accelerate, presenting both opportunities and challenges for our field. How we respond to these shifts, individually and collectively, will shape the future of educational, vocational and career guidance for generations to come.

At the heart of this issue lies Global Careers Month 2025 which brought together practitioners, researchers, and policymakers from every region of the world in a shared recognition of our profession's vital role in supporting individuals through times of uncertainty and transition. The regional reports offer a remarkable window into how our global community is responding to change. From refugee resettlement support to workforce reskilling, from youth engagement to policy advocacy, these contributions demonstrate how education-al, vocational and career guidance takes shape differently across contexts while remaining united by common values and purpose.

This issue also reflects on the importance of ethics in a changing world. As new technologies and evolving contexts reshape our practice, the frameworks that guide our work must evolve as well. An article on IAEVG's revised Ethical Guidelines explores these developments and their implications for practitioners worldwide.

Additionally, the issue features contributions that enrich our understanding of the profession's past, present, and future. with perspectives from Central and South-Eastern Europe, the Faroe Islands, France, India, and Sweden.

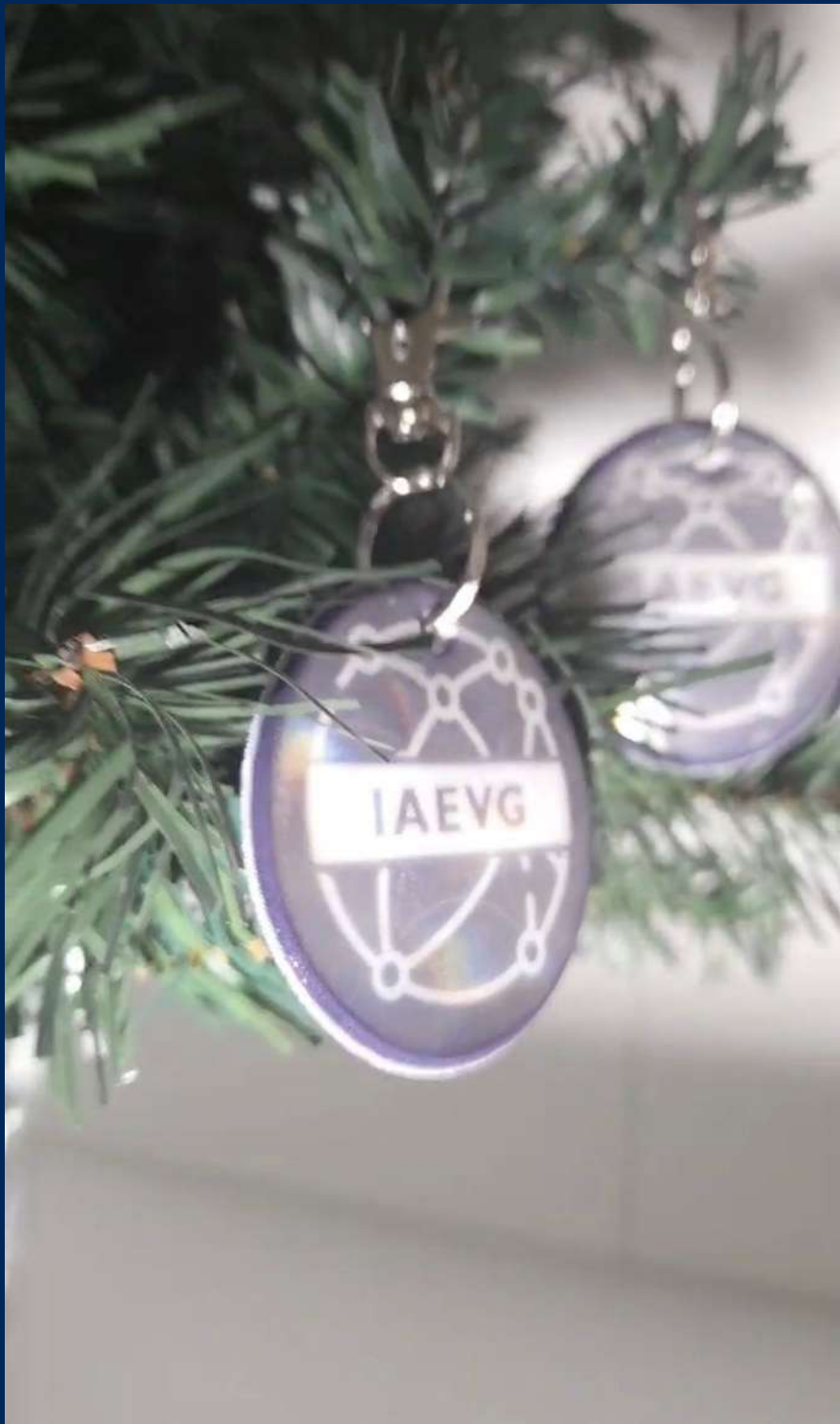
We hope this issue inspires reflection, innovation, and collaboration as we continue to learn from one another across borders and disciplines.

Call for contributions to Around the World Section – Next Issue Theme: Past, Present, Future

We welcome your contributions to *Around the World* section of the next issue of the IAEVG Magazine. Articles can explore the national or regional developments, highlight good practice and innovative approaches, or present research. We invite you to submit your articles, research findings, case studies and professional experiences related to the upcoming theme. Your insights will be invaluable to our global community of guidance professionals.

Author guidelines: <https://iaevg.com/IAEVG-Magazine>

Please send your contributions to editor@iaevg.com
Deadline for issue 99: **February 28th**



ETHICS AT THE HEART: IAEVG'S REVISED ETHICAL GUIDELINES REFLECT A CHANGING WORLD

By Jaana Kettunen

As part of Global Careers Month 2025, IAEVG hosted a webinar celebrating the publication of our revised ethical guidelines. The event brought together distinguished panelists from four continents to explore why ethics matter in educational, vocational and career guidance, what has changed in the IAEVG's revised Ethical Guidelines, and how these principles can be meaningfully applied across diverse international contexts.

Why Ethics Matter: The Foundation of Professional Practice

Nancy Arthur, from Adelaide University, Australia, opened the discussion by reminding participants that ethics are not merely abstract principles but practical tools that guide our daily decision-making. "Every career practitioner who works with people faces choices—often ongoing small and big decisions," she noted. "Ethics offer us guiding principles to inform action and integrity."

Arthur emphasized that ethical practice is fundamentally about managing power and vulnerability in professional relationships. Our work involves multiple stakeholders—individuals, groups, employers, institutions, and funding bodies—and ethics help us maintain clarity about our primary responsibilities while remaining transparent about the boundaries of our practice.

Crucially, Arthur positioned ethical guidelines as "living documents, not checklists." They serve as aspirational frameworks that bridge competence and care, promoting reflection and dialogue rather than rigid rule-following. This foundational perspective set the stage for understanding why revision was necessary.

The Revised Guidelines: Responding to Digital Transformation

Mary McMahon, IAEVG Board Member, presenting from Brisbane, Australia, provided a comprehensive overview of the six sections of the revised ethical guidelines. While much remains consistent with the 2017 version—reflecting enduring principles around informed consent,

confidentiality, social justice, and cultural sensitivity—the revision was primarily driven by the rapid advance of digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

"Digital technology and AI are providing many opportunities for us, but they're also providing many challenges," McMahon explained. The guidelines now define digital technologies broadly, encompassing online platforms, social media, mobile applications, web-based tools, ICT systems, telephone services, radio programs, and artificial intelligence.

The six sections address our ethical responsibilities to:

1. Clients—maintaining trustworthy relationships and high standards whether delivering services in person or online
2. Colleagues and professional associates—building strong professional relationships based on mutual trust and shared ethical commitments
3. Government, employers, community agencies, and community members—engaging with policy, advocating for equitable access, and addressing the digital divide
4. Research and knowledge production—conducting and disseminating research ethically in an increasingly digital landscape
5. Digital technologies—a new standalone section addressing competent use, professional judgment, informed consent, and regulatory compliance
6. Professional learning and development—maintaining competencies in all facets of practice, including digital competence



A South African Perspective: Contextualizing Ethics Locally

Maximus Sefotho, from the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, brought the discussion into focus by examining how the revised guidelines might be applied and adapted in the South African context. His presentation underscored the importance of what he called "equalization of epistemology"—ensuring that marginalized populations have access to and inclusion in educational and vocational guidance.

Sefotho highlighted several critical imperatives for his context: the need for transparency and consultation when policies change, community engagement that avoids excessive gatekeeping, and the development of locally relevant theories and models. "For a long time we have been buying wholesale models that come from elsewhere," he observed. "What can we say has been produced from the African soil?"

His call for "less dependency on foreign loan knowledge but promotion of home grown theories and models" resonated with the guidelines' emphasis on cultural sensitivity and inclusion. He also stressed the importance of publishing field-specific local journals in both local languages and English, and cautioned against over-reliance on AI

that might undermine the development of practitioners' own professional judgment and competencies.

Sefotho concluded by emphasizing that South Africa needs to demonstrate how to domesticate these international guidelines to national imperatives: "promoting what I want to refer to as holistic career development for equitable employment and social justice."

European and International Applications: Navigating Change

Jennifer McKenzie, presenting from Ireland, provided insights into how the revised guidelines serve practitioners across Ireland, Europe, and internationally. She emphasized that updated guidelines provide clarity about what distinguishes professionals from well-intentioned but untrained advisors: "Having these guidelines is really important for us to have as our core principles informing our everyday work."

McKenzie noted that across Europe, significant changes are underway—services have merged, professional bodies have been established or consolidated, and practitioners are navigating new legal requirements such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). "When there are changes and merges in services, guidance counselors

counselors who are members of a professional body, particularly IAEVG, could say: 'Hang on a minute, how is this going to affect my work? This doesn't fit with my standards, my code of ethics.'

Drawing on examples from North Macedonia's development of quality standards and Eastern Asian countries establishing career offices in higher education, McKenzie illustrated how the international guidelines provide "the place to start from" for countries at various stages of developing their career guidance systems.

Perhaps most provocatively, she asked participants to consider the consequences of not having ethical guidelines: "Our fundamental piece of work is to not cause harm to anybody that we work with. What would be the consequences of not having a code of ethics? What would we actually be doing if as professionals we couldn't stand over what we're doing?."

A Message to the Field

In her closing remarks, Nancy Arthur offered important reflections on the presentations. She commended the integration of digital technology and AI considerations throughout the various domains of the guidelines, rather than treating them solely as a standalone issue. She emphasized the critical importance of professional learning and development: "What does it mean to be digitally competent in our profession? I really invite our audience to think about where you are and where you might need to be in your professional practice around this notion of digital competence."

Arthur also reinforced the importance of locally relevant practice while acknowledging the value of comparative learning between countries. "It's really important that we honor where each country is,

where they're positioned in their own development, and guard against the import of standards," she noted. "There's one thing to adopt and adapt—we have to be really open to each country developing what they feel they need at that time."

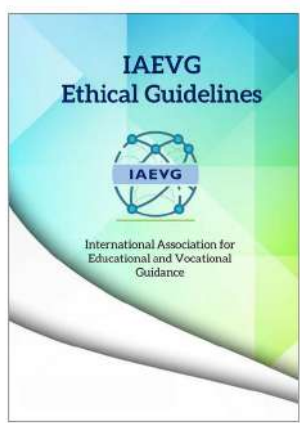
The fact that IAEVG has revised guidelines that were less than ten years old sends a powerful message to the international career guidance community: it is not only appropriate but necessary to regularly review and update professional ethical standards in response to societal and technological changes.

Living Documents for a Changing World

The webinar made clear that the revised IAEVG ethical guidelines are not merely regulatory documents but frameworks for ongoing professional reflection and growth. They acknowledge the realities of contemporary practice—the integration of digital technologies, the complexities of working across multiple stakeholder groups, the imperative of cultural sensitivity and social justice—while maintaining core commitments to client welfare, professional integrity, and competent practice.

As McMahon aptly put it, "Living documents means that they need to be changed as times change, and guidelines must change to reflect the current times." The 2025 revision demonstrates IAEVG's commitment to leading the field by ensuring our ethical foundations remain relevant and responsive.

All IAEVG members are encouraged to read, discuss, and apply the revised ethical guidelines in their professional settings. They are available on the IAEVG website and represent not just professional obligations but opportunities for deeper engagement with what it means to practice ethical educational, vocational, and career guidance in our complex, interconnected, and rapidly evolving world.



IAEVG ETHICAL GUIDELINES

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance. (2025). *IAEVG Ethical Guidelines*. <https://iaevg.com/Ethical-guidelines>

[Read online or download pdf](#)

GLOBAL CAREERS MONTH

WORK LEARNING
JOBS TRANSITIONS
EMPLOYMENT



By Glenda Quintini, Cynthia Harrison, Ramon Iriarte, Florian Kadletz, Pedro Moreno da Fonseca, Aristeia Politi, & Jaana Kettunen

November 2025 marked the second Global Careers Month—a coordinated international initiative that brought together over 130 events across every continent. Organized under the steer of the Inter-Agency Career Guidance Working Group (IAG WGCG), which includes the European Commission, Cedefop, the European Training Foundation (ETF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank, the month demonstrated the growing global recognition that career guidance is not a luxury but essential infrastructure for navigating today's rapidly changing world. The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) served as a key partner, coordinating regional and national efforts through its network of associations and practitioners worldwide.

Global Careers Month 2025 was designed to achieve three interconnected objectives. First, to raise awareness about the role and importance of effective career guidance in enabling access to decent work and careers, while supporting equitable and sustainable social and economic development. Second, to identify shared challenges facing career guidance systems development alongside the specificities linked to local contexts. Third, to showcase high-quality innovative solutions for successful educational, vocational and career guidance and to promote career development support in diverse contexts and for learners at different stages in their educational and career pathways.

To mark the initiative, the Inter-Agency Group published an updated joint statement titled "*Investing in Career Guidance*", outlining their joint understanding of why policy makers should invest in career guidance, what constitutes quality career guidance, and the benefits that effective guidance can deliver.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony convened the global career guidance community in a virtual event that set the tone for the month ahead. Representatives from Inter-Agency Group presented their perspectives on why career guidance matters in our rapidly changing world.

Florian Kadletz from the European Training Foundation (ETF) chaired the opening ceremony. He outlined the three core objectives driving Global Careers Month and introduced the newly updated joint statement on investing in career guidance.

Pedro Moreno da Fonseca from the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized career guidance's foundation in international labour standards. He highlighted how the ILO's Human Resource Development Convention positions career guidance as a universal right embedded in international law. The ILO continues to develop tools and methodologies for implementation in cooperation with social partners, with particular focus on low



From top left:
 Florian Kadletz (ETF),
 Pedro Moreno da Fonseca (ILO),
 Aristeia Politi (EC),
 Glenda Quintini (OECD),
 Cynthia Harrison (Cedefop),
 Ramon Iriarte (UNESCO)

and middle-income countries and vulnerable groups.

Glenda Quintini from the OECD presented evidence from international surveys. Drawing on PISA data covering 15-year-olds in over 80 countries, she noted that young people's career aspirations often remain narrow, with 60% aspiring to professional occupations that represent only 20% of the workforce. The OECD's research demonstrates that quality career guidance produces measurable outcomes, including significant wage premiums—but only when guidance is delivered effectively.

Cynthia Harrison from Cedefop brought attention to lifelong guidance and its relationship with lifelong learning. She noted that guidance cannot work in isolation—it requires shared responsibility among many actors. Cedefop promotes policy supporting career development, transversally across relevant sectors and through sufficient anchor points to ensure coherency and quality provisions.

Aristeia Politi from the European Commission (EC) presented the Union of Skills framework, adopted in March 2025, which brings together all EU education, training, and employment initiatives. She explained how career guidance is systematically integrated across the Union's four pillars: building skills for life, upskilling and reskilling, skills circulation and recognition, and attracting and retaining talent.

"Career guidance should never be seen as an extra or optional service—it is the right that everyone should have throughout their life."

Ramon Iriarte from UNESCO shared insights from work in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America supporting national TVET systems. He identified common challenges: skills mismatches between training and labour market needs, fragmented education pathways, and participation gaps among marginalized groups. He characterised career guidance as "a bridge between learning and earning, between aspiration and opportunity."

Closing Ceremony

On 26 November 2025, the closing ceremony brought together the global career guidance community to reflect on the month's activities. Chaired by Glenda Quintini from the OECD, the event featured reflections from key organizations, an interactive panel discussion showcasing innovative practices from around the world, and closing messages from each member of the Inter-Agency Group.

Jaana Kettunen, President of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), identified four recurring themes from the month's discussions. First, reaching those beyond formal systems—informal workers, marginalized youth, migrants, refugees, and those facing service gaps who need support most but are often least served. Second, fragmentation and lack of coordination—scattered activities and organizations doing valuable work in isolation with little collaboration and no integrated strategy. Third, capacity gaps—shortages of quality practitioners, service providers, and frameworks to assure quality. Fourth, the need for approaches that fit local realities—theory and practice must be culturally responsive.

Florian Kadletz reflected on system-building challenges in the EU neighbourhood. Key issues include cooperation and coordination at the systemic level, the rarity of comprehensive career guidance policies and strategies, limited and often unearmarked funding, and quality assurance gaps.

He noted that reforms are underway: Western Balkan countries and Ukraine are developing career guidance standards, countries are integrating career education into formal education from primary schooling onwards, and Montenegro recently adopted a national career guidance strategy. He emphasized that career guidance should be recognized as an investment rather than a cost.

Pedro Moreno Fonseca focused on the world of work perspective, noting that few adults actually use career guidance or are aware of its existence. High informality in low and middle-income countries means people have less access to labour market policies and, by extension, career guidance. The prevalence of micro and small enterprises, which often lack structured approaches to career development, compounds this challenge. Digital platforms alone cannot address these issues given the digital divide in many regions.

The closing ceremony identified several priorities for policy attention:

- *Reach people where they are:* Extend career guidance beyond formal systems to reach informal workers, marginalized youth, migrants, refugees, and those most in need of support.
- *Build coordinated national approaches:* Fragmented services cannot meet current challenges. Countries need integrated strategies that bring together stakeholders.
- *Invest in qualified practitioners:* Career services depend on the professionals who deliver them. Training, professional development, and quality standards must be prioritized.
- *Recognize career guidance as an investment:* Quality career guidance can reduce costs associated with reactive measures and contribute to improved labour market outcomes.
- *Secure stable funding:* Career guidance requires earmarked budgeting within national frameworks rather than ad hoc or project-based funding.
- *Embed career guidance in strategic policies:* Career guidance should be integrated into growth policies, sectoral policies, skills development, social protection, and employment strategies.

“ If I have to focus on one word regarding Global Careers Month, it's community. It really shows how you have many minds, a lot of diversity of ideas, but one heart, one purpose. ”

- *Adapt approaches to local realities:* Theory and practice must be culturally responsive, with communities involved in designing resources and services.

Looking Forward

Global Careers Month 2025 successfully demonstrated the strength and vitality of the international career guidance community. Over 130 events were registered in the global calendar, with many additional events taking place at national and local levels. This second edition expanded on the first Global Careers Month held in 2022.

As Glenda Quintini noted in closing: "The month doesn't finish with the closing event." The global community of practice established through this initiative will continue to support practitioners, policymakers, and researchers worldwide. And as expressed throughout both ceremonies, there is strong hope for a third Global Careers Month to continue this vital work.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all regional focal points, national associations, and the dedicated career guidance professionals who organized over 130 events worldwide. Furthermore, we thank the Finnish Institute for Educational Research for their valuable support in maintaining the global event calendars.

RESOURCES

Investing in career guidance: Joint statement of the Interagency Working Group on Career Guidance. <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/investing-career-guidance-0>

WEBINAR RECORDINGS

Global Careers Month 2025 Opening ceremony
https://youtu.be/g7fBcOQE64k?si=Y9XktCUW_63sbZY3

Global Careers Month 2025 Closing ceremony
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoOmPfcJc0E>

OCEANIA

Supporting Refugee Resettlement through Career Development

By David Carney



As part of Global Careers Month 2025, the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) hosted a webinar exploring how career development can support refugees and migrants in resettling, rebuilding their career identities, and contributing their talents within new communities. As the regional focal point for Oceania, CICA brought together researchers, practitioners, and advocates to address one of the most pressing challenges facing our profession: how do we provide meaningful, long-term career support to those who have been forcibly displaced?

The scale of forced displacement is staggering. As of mid-2024, over 122 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide—a number that has nearly doubled in the past decade. This includes more than 40 million refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons in need of international protection. While many displaced people move to neighbouring low and middle-income countries, high-income nations like Australia, Canada, and the United States serve as key resettlement destinations. Australia anticipates reaching a significant milestone: one million humanitarian visas issued since 1947. These are not just statistics—they represent neighbours, students, colleagues, and community members whose lives and careers have been profoundly disrupted.

Beyond Initial Job Placement

A central theme throughout the webinar was the need to move beyond initial job placement toward sustainable career development. Professor Nancy Arthur from the University of South Australia argued that while employment is essential for positive integration—providing security, income,

networks, and community belonging—current approaches often prioritize expedient placement over meaningful career alignment. Refugees frequently face pressure to accept any available work, resulting in mismatches between their actual qualifications and the positions they occupy.

The consequences extend beyond individual circumstances. When refugees work below their capacity, communities lose valuable human capital. Research suggests billions of dollars in economic benefit could be realised if refugees were supported to work at their full potential. Career development, then, is not merely a service—it is an investment with returns for individuals, families, and the broader economy.

Framework for Practitioners Working with Refugee Clients.

Dr. Peyman Abkhezr from Griffith University, Australia noted that traditional Western career counselling models often assume autonomy, self-direction, and linear decision-making—assumptions that may not align with the lived realities of people from collectivist cultures who have experienced protracted displacement. Many refugees carry not just CV gaps



Co-Designing Culturally Responsive Resources

Dr. Sally Baker, CEO of Refugee Education Australia, presented "Your Story Your Career"—an online employability resource co-designed with students from forced migration backgrounds, career practitioners, and settlement organizations. Built around Tomlinson's graduate capitals model, the resource recognizes that forced migration disrupts not just human capital but social and cultural capitals as well. User experience evaluation

but psychological exhaustion and an interrupted sense of identity.

The combination of narrative career counselling and Systems Theory Framework (STF) offers a more responsive approach. Narrative methods help clients reclaim agency by exploring and re-authoring their personal stories, while systems thinking maps the broader sociocultural factors shaping those stories—family influences, cultural norms, policy environments, and structural barriers. Together, these frameworks shift the question from "what job fits this person?" to "what barriers are shaping this person's opportunities, and how can I support them to navigate this complexity?"

Bridging Systemic Gaps

Dr. Jon Woodend from the University of Victoria, Canada highlighted the disconnect between refugee support services and career development expertise. Resettlement agencies, under pressure to meet placement metrics, often prioritize survival jobs over career pathways. Meanwhile, career development practitioners—who have the tools for long-term support—are rarely integrated into settlement services. When refugees do access career services, practitioners may lack specific training in trauma-informed practice or forced migration contexts.

The result is a revolving door: refugees cycle through survival jobs while career practitioners remain sidelined from meaningful intervention. Addressing this requires embedding career development expertise in multidisciplinary resettlement teams, developing specialized training streams, and promoting cross-profession collaboration between career services, social work, mental health, and policy sectors.

found that participants valued the representation of refugee alumni, opportunities for strength-based self-reflection, and an integration rather than assimilation lens.

Lessons from Oceania

The Oceania regional event reinforced that career development for refugees requires a fundamental shift in how we approach our work. Three key lessons emerged:

- First, we must move from deficit narratives to strength-based, capacity-building approaches that recognize refugees as active stakeholders in their own career development.
- Second, effective support requires integrating career development expertise into settlement services and equipping practitioners with training in trauma-informed, culturally responsive practice.
- Third, in an era of anti-migration rhetoric and precarious funding, professional associations have a vital advocacy role—making the case for career development as essential infrastructure for refugee integration and economic productivity.



David Carney
Executive Director
Career Industry Council of Australia

cica

WEBINAR RECORDING

The full webinar recording is available on the CICA YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/Pene3BMMj0g>

EAST AFRICA

Career Guidance as Catalyst for Youth Employability



By Margaret Waithaka & Mercy Maina

As part of Global Careers Month 2025, the East African Career Development Association (EACDA) and the Career Development Association of Kenya (CDAK) hosted a webinar examining how career guidance functions in contexts far removed from urban employment centers. Through a case study of rural employment services in two of Kenya's most remote counties—Turkana and Garissa, home to the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps—the event demonstrated that structured career support can transform employment outcomes even in the most challenging settings.

Margaret Waithaka, Chair of EACDA, opened by outlining the regional landscape. Rural areas across East Africa experience high unemployment and underemployment, driving persistent migration to urban centers. Formal job markets are limited; agriculture, fishing, and informal work dominate. Many residents lack information about job opportunities, training pathways, or emerging economic sectors. Career guidance in these contexts must address not only employment matching but also skills development, entrepreneurship support, and access to labor market information.

Rural Employment Services in Turkana and Garissa

Dr. Mercy Maina Head of Standards and Ethics at EACDA, presented a case study from an ILO project funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project implemented rural employment services (RES) in Turkana County (northwestern Kenya, home to Kakuma refugee camp) and Garissa County (northeastern Kenya, home to Dadaab refugee camp), targeting both refugees and host communities.

The implementation strategy prioritized sustainability through existing structures. The project mapped relevant institutions and established memoranda of understanding with strategic partners—ten organizations across both regions. Rather than creating parallel systems, it worked through the National Employment Authority's existing job centers. Partners received training in career guidance and employability skills so they could support job seekers arriving at their organizations.

Job seekers registered, received training in job search strategies (CV writing, interview preparation, job leads), and were then mapped to appropriate pathways based on their circumstances. Six pathways emerged: vocational skills training, apprenticeships, digital skills and online work, skills upgrading, internships, and direct employment. For women and others with limited formal education or language barriers, the project arranged on-the-job skills transfer in areas like tie-dye, pastry making, and soap production.

Results and Transitions

Against a target of 7,500 registrations, the project achieved 6,186 (82%). Over 3,100 job seekers completed job search skills training. More significant

207 moved into skills development or upgrading programs; 1,278 transitioned into entrepreneurship; 433 entered apprenticeships or work-based learning; 190 gained digital skills and online work; 50 secured internships; and 654 found direct employment. The overall transition rate reached 62%.

Dr. Massey emphasized what these figures represent: "A 62% transition rate shows that if job seekers in rural areas are given support, they can enter the labor market. The state of hopelessness that rural areas experience can be reduced."

From Rejection to Opportunity

Two success stories illustrated the human impact. Person from Dadaab completed high school with a B-minus—a strong result for a marginalized area—but faced rejection after rejection when applying for scholarships and jobs. Through the RES program, he learned CV writing, scholarship applications, and job profile development. He successfully secured a Mastercard Foundation scholarship and, using job-seeking strategies from the training, landed freelance work on Upwork.

Person from Kakuma spent six months job searching with no results, sending dozens of applications weekly without receiving interviews. After enrolling in the job strategy training, she learned to tailor her resume for specific roles, write compelling cover letters, and optimize her LinkedIn profile. Within three weeks of applying what she learned, she received two interview invitations. A week later, she had a job offer from one of the partner organizations.

Lessons Learned

Six lessons emerged from the project. First, job skills and search training yield immediate, tangible results—when job seekers gain skills and confidence, they actively pursue opportunities. Second, employer engagement matters; job seekers need connections to actual vacancies. Third, referral systems must accommodate diverse needs—some seek skills training, others entrepreneurship support, others counseling for psychosocial issues from long-term unemployment.

Fourth, apprenticeship programs serve those with limited formal education who cannot access traditional training institutions. Fifth, labor market information is power—the more accessible it becomes, the better outcomes for vulnerable

populations. Sixth, business development support and financial access linkages help those pursuing entrepreneurship.

Sustainability Through Integration

The project's sustainability strategy proved effective. Partner organizations integrated career guidance activities into their existing structures and programs—they continue supporting refugees and host communities after the project ended. Career guidance has been mainstreamed within Kenya's public employment services, with over 100 employment officers trained. The National Employment Authority now treats career guidance as a key pillar of service delivery.

Lessons from East Africa

- Rural employment services require strategic design. Working through existing structures—national employment authorities, local partners, community organizations—builds sustainability. Creating parallel systems leads to collapse when project funding ends.
- Career guidance serves as connector, not just counselor. In contexts with limited formal employment, guidance links job seekers to training programs, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship support, and labor market information—not just job matching.
- Pathways must fit circumstances. A single approach cannot serve refugees with graduate degrees and women with only mother-tongue literacy. Multiple pathways—vocational training, digital skills, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship—allow tailored support.



Margaret Waitthaka
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East African Career Development Association (EACDA) and Career Development Association of Kenya (CDAK)



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SOUTH AMERICA

Latin American Symposium on Career Education and Guidance



By Natalia Orellana

A two-day online symposium brought together leading voices from across Latin America to articulate what career guidance means—and could mean—in the region's context. Held November 12-13 Fundación OCIDES in collaboration with Universidad Central de Chile and Universidad Santo Tomás, the event featured presentations from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, and Chile that challenged conventional approaches while offering frameworks grounded in local realities.

Sergio Rascován from Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (Argentina) delivered a keynote that reframed how we understand career decision-making in contemporary society. Drawing on Renata Salecl, Michael Sandel, and Byung-Chul Han, Rascován identified five "tyrannies of the era" that constrain rather than enable genuine choice: the tyranny of choice (unlimited options as absolute good while isolating individuals), the tyranny of merit (winners deserve success, losers internalize blame), the tyranny of performance (subjects as entrepreneurs of themselves), and the tyranny of algorithms (surveillance capitalism disguised as convenience). These tyrannies demand obedience through seduction rather than coercion.

Rascován challenged the concept of "vocation" as a fixed identity to be discovered, proposing instead vocational paths as ongoing "itineraries" and "transitional trajectories." Anxiety in career decision-making should not be eliminated through quick assessments but understood as what Kierkegaard called "the vertigo of freedom"—a compass orienting individuals toward authentic desires.

Culturally Relevant Guidance from Brazil

Marcelo Afonso Ribeiro from the University of São Paulo offered a critique of Northern-dominated theories in career development. He argued that guidance developed in affluent, stable labor markets often fails to address Latin American realities: high informality, precarious work, and populations for whom "career" in the traditional sense has never been accessible.

Ribeiro called for a shift from regulatory approaches (helping individuals adapt to existing systems) toward emancipatory practices that contribute to social transformation. This requires intercultural guidance based on social justice, dignity in work, and co-construction of knowledge between practitioners and those they serve—not experts delivering solutions to passive recipients.

Older Workers and Social Justice in Colombia

Angélica María Londoño from Universidad del Valle examined the intersection of aging, work, and career guidance. Her presentation highlighted regional realities: 48% labor informality across Latin America and a pension crisis leaving 35% of older people without income. Various forms of work among older populations—continuity, survival, hybrid models—emerge from necessity rather than choice.

Building Public Policy Infrastructure in Uruguay

Juan Aldaba Acuña and Paula Guerrero Mercón from Uruguay's National Youth Institute (INJU) provided an overview of their country's evolving approach to career guidance within social policy. Beginning with ProJoven programs in the 1990s, Uruguay has developed a network spanning multiple ministries: employment centers, vocational training, disability services, and drug rehabilitation programs—each serving specific populations with tailored approaches while sharing common conceptual foundations.

Advances include consolidating educational-labor guidance as a specific function within social policy, forming public institutional infrastructure, and achieving conceptual agreement across agencies. Challenges remain: coordinating inter-institutional networks, developing training systems for public servants, and repositioning guidance as relevant not only for job seekers but throughout life transitions.

A notable finding was strong demand for vocational discernment services—educational institutions requesting sessions exceeded available capacity, suggesting unmet need in the population. The Uruguayan team emphasized incorporating mental health considerations into career guidance, recognizing that job searching generates anxiety among young people.

Interculturality in Chilean Higher Education

María Francisca Rojas and Pamela Canales Poo from Universidad de la Frontera grounded their discussion in the Araucanía Region's context, where 34.5% of the population identifies as indigenous—99% Mapuche. Among over 11,000 undergraduate students, 29.48% declare Mapuche ancestry, approximately 3,200 students whose career development needs must be understood within cultural contexts that may differ from dominant frameworks.

Their career services model addresses the shift from Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous to Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible. Programs range from autonomous online modules to career-specific workshops and alumni mentoring, with approximately 1,700 students enrolled per semester in their "Prepare for your Professional Future" program. A recurring finding: students report not feeling prepared for the labor market even after completing programs. They report strong technical preparation but high

uncertainty about employment processes—indicating that support must address psychological and confidence dimensions alongside practical skills.

Need for a National Strategy

Gonzalo Gallardo from OCIDES Foundation (Chile) reported research results conducted by the organization between 2022 and 2024 shows that, in general, the experiences of higher education graduates reflect uncertainty and precarity in the labor world, counterbalanced by effort, sacrifice, and self-demand. In this context, the importance of moving towards the existence of a national lifelong guidance strategy or public policy in Chile was highlighted.

Lessons from Latin America

- Career guidance must serve transformation, not just adaptation. Guidance that merely adjusts individuals to unjust systems perpetuates those injustices.
- Context determines practice. Latin American practitioners cannot simply import Northern frameworks. Culturally relevant, socially just guidance must be co-constructed with the communities it serves.
- Guidance must go to the borders. Those who do not enjoy the same right to choose deserve guidance that comes to them.
- Mental health and career are inseparable. The symposium reinforced that career support must address psychological dimensions, not merely technical preparation.
- A terminological challenge persists. Within Latin America, discourse revolves around vocational, professional, and occupational guidance from diverse perspectives, while "career development" is subject to varying interpretations. Establishing standardized regional nomenclature is needed to elevate these subjects to national policy and public interest.



Natalia Orellana
Executive Director
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SYMPOSIUM RECORDING

The complete symposium videos are available on OCIDES web page:

<https://ocides.org/desarrollodecarreralatam>

ASIA

• Navigating Demographic Change, Technology and Inclusion



By Jeongwon Choi

As part of Global Careers Month 2025, The Future Oriented Youth Society and The Japanese Society for the Study of Career Education hosted a joint webinar series bringing together researchers from Japan and Korea. The four sessions examined work-based learning, AI's impact on employment, and career support for marginalized groups.

As we observe Global Careers Month (GCM) 2025, the professional community is compelled to acknowledge a fundamental shift in its mandate. Historically, career guidance has been viewed through a utilitarian lens—imparting skills to facilitate individual upward mobility. However, standing before a "polycrisis" characterized by a demographic cliff, disruptive technological innovation, and deepening social exclusion, this traditional paradigm is no longer tenable. Career guidance must be redefined not merely as a tool for success, but as the ultimate social infrastructure safeguarding human survival and dignity. As highlighted by the recent Joint Japan-Korea Webinar Series, the critical value of "connection" amidst these crises compels us to look beyond cold statistics and address the systemic ruptures in our society.

The concrete manifestations of this crisis appear most starkly in the weakest links of our social fabric. In Japan, a severe demographic decline—evidenced by a Total Fertility Rate of 1.15—has accelerated school consolidations under the banner of "economic efficiency." However, a critical examination reveals that the "Part-time Night) High Schools" being dismantled in this

Process are not mere byproducts of inefficiency. Empirical data indicates they serve as the sole "safety net" for vulnerable youth, including those with histories of truancy or special educational needs. The case of Ueda Chikuma High School in Japan, where hands-on learning is utilized to restore the self-esteem of marginalized students, poses a profound question to the global community: What is the value of macro-level economic efficiency if it necessitates severing the very pipeline that connects our most vulnerable children to society?

While demographic contraction threatens the fundamental safety nets of education, the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is simultaneously dismantling the traditional ladders of the labor market. Recent analyses have moved beyond vague apprehension to warn of a concrete "disconnection" in labor demand. Data regarding "Seniority-Biased Technological Change"—illustrated by a precipitous 10% decline in junior hiring following the adoption of Generative AI—suggests that the first rung of the career ladder is vanishing for the younger generation. In an era where automation increasingly supersedes routine cognitive tasks, educators must evolve from mere knowledge transmitters into "Opportunity Brokers." Their role must shift toward actively connecting students with real-

world projects and mentors, enabling youth to cultivate a "Portfolio of Skills"—such as complex analytical thinking and ethical judgment—that remain beyond the reach of algorithmic replication.

However, the challenges of 2025 extend beyond these structural and technical disruptions to a more profound wound: "existential exclusion." Educational institutions, while struggling with external pressures, can paradoxically serve as hostile environments for minorities internally. Survey data from Japan indicating that LGBTQ youth face suicide attempt rates more than three times higher than their peers demonstrates that career education is not simply a matter of occupational selection, but a matter of "survival." Intellectual comprehension of diversity is insufficient. Through the pedagogical practice of "Becoming"—the act of deeply empathizing with the "other"—career guidance must evolve into a practice of "Social Justice." This requires a commitment to resonating with the pain of marginalized groups, for one cannot envision a future in a space where one's existence is fundamentally denied.

To reconstruct these fractured pathways—whether broken by demographics, technology, or exclusion—we require a unifying systemic intervention. The solution lies in "Work-Based Learning (WBL)," re-envisioned not as a vocational alternative, but as a "Systemic Strategy" applicable to all students. WBL functions as a strategic bridge connecting classroom theory with workplace reality, effectively dismantling the historical dichotomy between "academic" and "vocational" tracks. By utilizing intermediaries to curate matches between employers and students, WBL serves as a powerful instrument for equity. It ensures that students with extensive support needs are not excluded and provides the necessary context for applying human skills in an AI-driven world, transforming the abstract concept of "fair opportunity" into tangible, operational infrastructure.

Ultimately, the mission of career guidance in 2025 converges on the dual themes of "Recovery" and "Connection." Whether the disconnect stems from population decline erasing schools, AI raising employment thresholds, or prejudice excluding individuals from the classroom, our era demands a concerted effort to reconnect disconnected individuals to the social body. We must prioritize a sense of belonging

over efficiency, human dignity over technical proficiency, and "heated solidarity" over cold observation. This is the new definition of career guidance that we must collectively author for a sustainable future.

Lessons from Asia:

- **Transitioning from Efficiency to Social Infrastructure:** The demographic crisis in Asia reveals that prioritizing "economic efficiency"—such as school consolidations—can sever critical safety nets for vulnerable youth. Career guidance must be redefined not as a utilitarian tool, but as essential "social infrastructure" that safeguards human dignity and survival against systemic ruptures.
- **WBL as a Systemic Strategy for Equity in the AI Era:** To counter "Seniority-Biased Technological Change" where AI disrupts entry-level opportunities, educators must evolve into "Opportunity Brokers." Asian cases suggest that Work-Based Learning (WBL) should be elevated from a vocational alternative to a "systemic strategy" for all students, bridging the gap between classroom theory and the evolving demands of the labor market.
- **"Heated Solidarity" to Combat Existential Exclusion:** In societies facing deepening isolation, intellectual comprehension of diversity is insufficient. Career guidance must adopt a pedagogy of "Becoming"—deeply empathizing with the marginalized—and prioritise "heated solidarity" over cold observation to recover a sense of belonging for those facing existential threats.



Dr. Jeongwon Choi, Chair, International Cooperation Committee, Future Oriented Youth Society, Korea

WEBINAR RECORDINGS

Hands-on Learning in Work-Based Learning: A Japanese Case Study.

Atsushi OKABE (Seisen University, Japan)

<https://youtu.be/8OanA8Xu6Wo>

The AI Era: Navigating the Shifting World of Work: Analyzing Job Transformation, Required Competencies, and the Future of Career Education.

Minwook LEE (Incheon National University, Korea)

<https://youtu.be/WmgLNtK8xmK>

Career Education as "Becoming": Educational Practices Concerning the Career of Sexual Minorities in Japan.

Shintaro TAKANO (Secondary School attached to the Faculty of Education, the University of Tokyo, Japan)

<https://youtu.be/tk-huZ6iOGY>

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Career Development Week MENA



By Emad Helmy & Jaana Kettunen

As part of Global Careers Month 2025, the Career Development Week MENA Initiative convened practitioners, researchers, and policymakers from across the Middle East and North Africa for a week-long online event exploring the state and future of career guidance in the region. Held November 14-21 under the theme "Career Development Journey in the Middle East and North Africa," the event addressed a question that resonates across the region: Is career development a profession, or merely a collection of activities? The initiative brought together voices from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and beyond—alongside international contributors

The MENA region—defined by the initiative following UNICEF's classification as encompassing 20 countries from Morocco to Iran—faces distinctive challenges in career development. Youth unemployment remains high across the region, while rapid economic diversification in Gulf states creates new occupational pathways that existing educational systems struggle to address. Traditional family influence on educational and career choices remains strong, and formal career guidance infrastructure varies widely between countries.

Career Development Week MENA was launched with a vision to have "Career development services operate within a systematic framework in the region". Its founders set out to raise awareness in our communities about the Career Development concept and to support the institutionalisation of career development services in the Middle East and North Africa—so that they are nationally managed and supported. In addition to support qualifying the Career service providers.

From Activities to Profession

The Career Development Week MENA 2025, conducted online, included many themes. The first theme tackled the professionalisation question directly. Presenters examined ethical and professional standards governing career development, the distinction between guidance and empowerment, pathways for qualifying practitioners, and the role of ministries and institutions in ensuring quality services.

Dr. Ghassan Nimr from Jordan explored career guidance as a profession through an Islamic lens, examining how the concept of "profession" in Islamic thought might inform ethical frameworks for practitioners in the region. Dr. Aliaa Al-Dardiri addressed teacher qualification and the quality of career guidance delivery in schools—a topic that resonates across contexts where classroom teachers are often expected to provide career support without specialized training. While Dr. Shahinaz Khalil, from Germany, discussed mechanisms for leveraging educational systems to spread awareness about career development, sharing an example from Egypt.

Dr. Ghazal Fahidi, from Derby University, shared how career development influence quality of education, economic empowerment and social justice, bringing the example of Iran. Dr. Zubaida Abu Shuaymah, shared the Jordanian experience with career guidance and counselling, and Ms. Seham AL Mohsen brought the experience from KSA regarding the practical training in the Bachelor's stage.

A recurring theme was the need for assessment tools validated for MENA populations. Dr. Rasheed Arar presented work on developing and standardizing vocational interest measures adapted to Palestinian contexts, while Dr. Mahmoud Salama from Egypt discussed educational pathway assessment tools used in the region and possibilities for their development.

Labor Market Information and Career Services

The second theme examined the relationship between career development and labor market information—a connection that remains underdeveloped in many MENA countries. Sessions explored the private sector's role in career development activities, how labor market and occupational information can strengthen guidance services, and the relationship between career development and both worker productivity and mental health. Dr. Ahmed al Omary touched the topic from the strategic aspects. Ms. Maha Moslemany and Lydiah Botros from Cairo presented the practical side regarding the Employers' perspective. Ms. Rasha Abu AL Nasr also discussed the employment challenges.

Dr. Mowafaq A Imam addressed career development in the context of artificial intelligence and the future of work—a topic with relevance as Gulf economies invest heavily in technology sectors while other parts of the region grapple with automation's potential displacement effects. The discussion highlighted a tension familiar from other regions: helping individuals adapt to changing labor markets while advocating for policies that ensure those markets provide decent work.

Building Awareness in Arab Societies

The third theme addressed awareness of career development's importance within Arab societies. Sessions also examined the role of education in promoting career awareness, family influence on children's educational and career choices, and career development's role in women's empowerment. Mr. Ahmed Mostafa and Ms. Farkad Mahli focused on this issue in their session.

The family dynamics session touched on a reality that differentiates MENA contexts from many Western frameworks: career decisions are often collective rather than individual, shaped by family expectations, honor, and economic considerations intertwined. Practitioners in the region must navigate these dynamics, supporting individual agency while respecting cultural contexts that emphasize familial and community relationships.

Building Regional Capacity

The fourth theme focused on research and studies in career development specific to the MENA region. Dr. Linda Ashkouti from Lebanon, as a representative of UNIMED, presented on research trends and studies in the region, while Dr. Iyad Yaacoub examined career decision-making models and their applicability to MENA contexts. Dr. Amr Ghanam from the European Institute for Cooperation (IECD) presented on developing business models for career development services—addressing the sustainability question that faces practitioners seeking to establish services in contexts where public funding may be limited and willingness to pay for career guidance remains nascent. Mr. Mohammed Tolba guided the presence on how to invest in their personal branding and networking.

The event also functioned as a capacity-building exercise, with the organizing team—including Emad Helmy (Career Advisory Tools International), Rasha Abu Al Nasr (Egypt), Farkad Mahli (KSU), Mira Al-Samirat (Jordan), and others.

Key Lessons from MENA

- Professionalization requires regional standards. The question of whether career development is a profession or merely activities can only be answered through developing ethical standards, practitioner qualifications, and quality frameworks appropriate to MENA contexts—not simply importing Western models.
- Assessment tools need local validation. The region needs investment in developing and validating tools that reflect local labor markets, cultural values, and educational systems.
- Career guidance must engage with family systems. In contexts where career decisions involve families and communities, practitioners must develop approaches that support individual agency while working within—not against—cultural expectations around collective decision-making.
- Regional collaboration amplifies limited resources. No single MENA country has sufficient scale to develop comprehensive career development infrastructure alone.

Emad Helmy
CEO
Career Advisory Tools International



NORTH AMERICA

Amplifying Advocacy: Career Development in a Disrupted World of Work



By Sareena Hopkins & Candy Ho

How can career development professionals move beyond acknowledging disruption to shaping solutions? This was the central question driving the North America regional event for Global Careers Month 2025, jointly organised by the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF), CERIC, and the National Career Development Association (NCDA). The discussion moved through five interconnected themes—decent work, mental health integration, artificial intelligence, youth unemployment, and entrepreneurship.

The panel opened with sobering numbers: career professionals' wages that fall short of living costs and funding for career services lagging behind other OECD countries. These are the conditions under which North American practitioners work.

"Decent work" is not merely an aspiration, Tristram Hooley reminded participants, but a technical framework used by the UN and International Labour Organization: living wages, holiday rights, autonomy, healthcare access, and workplace safety. Career development professionals can help clients understand these as reasonable expectations rather than distant dreams—and help them advocate for better conditions through individual and collective action.

But dignity extends beyond wages. Sharon Givens described what trauma-informed services look like: shifting from "what is wrong with this person" to "what has happened to them." When someone chooses between rent, food, and transportation, adding layers of paperwork only compounds stress. Janet Morris-Reade put it simply: "Dignity means meeting people as whole human beings, not as a set of eligibility criteria."

Rethinking What Success Means

If government metrics drive practice, the panel argued, then changing what we measure could change what we achieve. Shelby McIntyre invited participants to "freedom dream": imagine career services measured not only by job placements, but by whether clients secure sustainable employment aligned with their values; by their confidence to navigate future disruptions; and by whether employers become more client-ready rather than expecting all adaptation from job seekers.

Janet Morris-Reade described a labour market transformed from pyramid to diamond shape—fewer entry-level positions, young people sending hundreds of applications through automated portals, filtered by algorithms, often for phantom jobs. The pandemic's long tail means many youth missed formative early work experiences. In this context, measuring success only by immediate placement judges people on a process stacked against them from the start.

"These are not soft outcomes," Morris-Reade emphasized when discussing attachment, confidence, identity, and belonging. "They are foundational. Without them, job placements rarely stick." Givens

reinforced this point: trauma-informed care requires smaller caseloads for clients with intensive needs, interdisciplinary teams, and warm handoffs between services—none of which short-term, high-target funding models support.

Embracing Complexity

The discussions on artificial intelligence and entrepreneurship revealed the layered thinking our field requires. On AI, Hooley raised important questions: "Who owns AI? Where is our data going? What problems is AI actually solving?" Career development has built scientifically validated assessment tools and approaches over decades, and that foundation deserves careful consideration as new technologies emerge.

Wendy Cukier brought a complementary perspective from the Diversity Institute. Career practitioners might also consider how AI can address systemic inefficiencies—fragmented information, repeated storytelling, and weak outcome tracking. Medical schools are already developing AI training agents; similar applications in career development may follow. The question is whether our sector shapes that future or is shaped by it.

Entrepreneurship prompted similarly nuanced discussion. Cukier noted that creativity, adaptability, and critical thinking serve people whether they work for themselves or within organizations—these skills are increasingly recognized as foundational. Sharon Givens added essential context, citing ILO data showing 61% of the global workforce operates in the informal economy without basic protections.

Amplifying Advocacy

Career development professionals hold expertise that policymakers need—but that expertise must be communicated strategically to drive change. Janet Morris-Reade shared a telling example: government data suggested British Columbia's employment providers were not teaching foundational skills—until they discovered a billing portal applet was not collecting the data. The work was happening; it simply was not visible to decision-makers. "Career development professionals are the experts," she said. "They [need to] inform the programs because they see it firsthand."

But seeing is not enough. Wendy Cukier, challenged participants to consider their audience. Advocacy among colleagues who share our beliefs will not shift policy; we must frame our message for those who think differently.

Hooley, while valuing evidence, warned against tying practitioners to endless data collection. "We know career interventions are effective," he noted. "We need to be better at representing our evidence base in frames that appeal to policymakers"—not generating more data, but using what we have strategically.

Effective advocacy, the panel suggested, means translating ground-level knowledge into language that resonates with funders, employers, and legislators—and building coalitions that amplify the practitioner voice where decisions are made.

Lessons from North America

- Dignity must be the foundation, not an afterthought. The panel consistently returned to the principle that career development serves whole human beings—not eligibility criteria, not placement targets, not labor market abstractions.
- Multi-year funding makes effective practice possible. Short-term funding and high-volume targets undermine relationship-building and the developmental outcomes that make placements stick.
- Strategic advocacy requires knowing your audience. Evidence matters, but so does framing. Career development professionals must translate frontline expertise into arguments that resonate beyond our field—making the case not just for more resources, but for fundamentally different approaches to measuring success.

Sareena Hopkins, Executive Director of the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF).



Candy Ho, Past Board Chair CERIC & Faculty, Kwantlen Polytechnic University.



PANEL DISCUSSION RECORDING

(Available until 28th of February 2026)

The complete panel discussion is available on the NCDA YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/o2XxiPTmpfg>

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Redefining Employability: Voices from Southern Africa



By Maximus Monaheng Sefotho & Chris Beukes

What does employability mean in a context where 40% of youth are unemployed—and those with qualifications face even higher rates? The Southern Africa regional event for Global Careers Month 2025 tackled this question head-on, hosted by Likusasa Letfu Youth Centre for Employability in Eswatini. Rather than simply telling the global audience about employability challenges, the organisers chose to show them—through a documentary filmed and produced in just three days by young filmmakers from Eswatini and South Africa, followed by a live youth panel discussion.

Likusasa Letfu is unique in Eswatini—a comprehensive youth centre for employability open to the public. While career guidance exists in schools, this centre offers something broader: a space where young people can enhance employability skills, access education advice and scholarships, receive bursaries, prepare CVs, practice job interviews, or even borrow a jacket for that crucial first meeting with an employer. The center also supports entrepreneurs at different stages of their enterprise journey. This year, the team undertook training in career guidance, positioning themselves to champion this work across the region.

Beyond Finding a Job

The event's central message challenged conventional notions of employability. In contexts where formal employment is scarce, employability cannot simply mean "getting hired." The youth-led discussion unpacked employment, entrepreneurship, and subsistence as equally valid forms of decent and meaningful work—expanding the definition to encompass sustainability, valuing people, profit, and planet together.

When panellists were asked whether they envision employment "somewhere else" or where they are, their answers reflected local realities. One young entrepreneur explained: "I believe that with whatever resources I have access to, I can try and do something rather than trying to leave my community. The job market is getting saturated, so for me being employed means having the ability to utilize resources where I am to earn a living." Another added: "It doesn't matter whether I'm home or outside—as long as I'm able to provide for myself, for my community, and change the world for a better place."

Hidden Employability

One of the most powerful moments came when a panellist shared the story of her mother—a woman who never attended school but raised nine children by selling fruits and vegetables on the street. "She was a hustler," the young woman explained. "She was able to provide for all of us and take care of our school needs." Yet paradoxically, this same mother believed success meant formal education and traditional employment. She didn't recognize that she herself was already deeply "employable"—creating her own livelihood through enterprise and determination.

This story captured a tension at the heart of the discussion: communities and families often reinforce narrow definitions of success even when their own lived experience demonstrates alternatives. Breaking this cycle requires not just educating young people but transforming mindsets across generations.

The Readiness Gap

Panellists reflected honestly on whether school had prepared them for employability. The consensus was clear: formal education trains young people to pursue more education, not to create livelihoods. One participant noted that high school partially supported her dreams but didn't provide opportunities to showcase what she could actually do—it was university that exposed her to industry realities and the skills needed to survive in the workspace or create something for herself.

A young deaf participant, supported by a sign language interpreter, highlighted additional barriers: difficulty accessing career information, limited exposure to vocational options like welding, and no business education during school. His experience underscored that employability support must be accessible to all young people, including those with disabilities.

If I Were Minister of Education

The discussion culminated in a thought experiment: what would you do as Minister of Education to prepare students for employability? The young people proposed:

- *Include entrepreneurship and practical skills* in the curriculum alongside academic subjects—ICT, agriculture, African cultural knowledge—and embed career guidance so students can explore paths aligned with their interests.
- *Transform attitudes toward non-traditional careers.* When a child says "I want to be a farmer," the classroom shouldn't laugh. That child may become an employer who hires the graduates. Teachers and parents need to understand that starting a business is as significant as—perhaps more than—becoming a doctor or engineer.
- *Invest in parents alongside children.* You cannot change a child's mindset without changing the parent's mindset. If schools create transformative programs but parents pull children back toward rigid expectations, the cycle continues. Career education must be a family affair.



- *Ask young people what they want to learn.* Rather than forcing predetermined paths, educators should understand each student's aspirations and help them build toward those goals—breaking down communication barriers for all learners, including those who are deaf or differently abled.

Lessons from Southern Africa

The Southern Africa regional event offered a distinctly different lens on career development—one shaped by high youth unemployment, limited formal employment opportunities, and the reality that self-employment and subsistence are how many people actually build their lives. Three lessons emerged:

- First, employability must be defined broadly to include entrepreneurship and subsistence alongside formal employment—recognizing that creating a job is as valuable as finding one.
- Second, career guidance belongs in schools from an early age, integrated with practical skills and connected to family expectations—not as an afterthought but as core curriculum.
- Third, young people themselves are the experts on what they need. When given space to speak, they articulate visions for educational transformation that adults would do well to hear.



Maximus Monaheng Sefotho
Chairperson
South Africa Career Development Association



Chris Beukes
Chief Executive Officer
South Africa Career Development Association



WEBINAR RECORDING

The full webinar recording is available on the SACDA YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/kR87Dw6sYe8>

EUROPE

Sustaining Guidance within the Union of Skills



By Ilze Jansone & Jaana Kettunen

As part of Global Careers Month 2025, the Euroguidance Network hosted its European Conference in Riga, Latvia on December 2–3. The conference theme, "Sustaining Guidance within the Union of Skills," reflected the European Commission's vision of strengthening connections between skills, learning, and work. Over two inspiring days, participants explored how career guidance can serve as a catalyst for both individual development and broader societal transformation.

Following a warm welcome from Ilze Astrida Jansone of Euroguidance Latvia, IAEVG President Jaana Kettunen reflected on the energy and commitment visible across the Global Careers Month events worldwide. She highlighted that together we are shaping the future where everyone has the support to thrive.

The Union of Skills: A Framework for Action

Olga Tsiouvra from the European Commission's DG EMPL delivered the opening keynote, situating career guidance within the Union of Skills framework. Her message was clear: career guidance professionals are essential partners in achieving Europe's skills ambitions. As labour markets transform and skills requirements shift, guidance practitioners serve as bridges—helping individuals navigate complexity while contributing to broader policy goals around mobility, upskilling, and lifelong learning.

To mark the initiative, the interagency group has published an updated joint statement titled "*Investing in Career Guidance*", outlining their joint understanding of why policy makers should invest in career guidance, what constitutes quality career guidance, and the benefits that effective guidance can deliver.

Lifelong Guidance: Beyond Individual Choice

A recurring theme throughout the conference was the evolving understanding of lifelong guidance. Careers are no longer linear or predictable—learning, working, and living are increasingly intertwined. This calls for guidance approaches that support people throughout their lives, not just at transition points.

Presentations explored how different European countries are developing their lifelong guidance systems, with frameworks emerging to help assess system readiness and identify areas for development. The discussion highlighted that effective lifelong guidance requires coordination across sectors—education, employment, and social services must work together to create seamless support for people at all life stages.

Rethinking Careers for Sustainability

In his keynote Tomáš Šprlák challenged participants to confront uncomfortable truths: work as we know it is often not sustainable for people or the planet. Rising burnout, jobs with limited social value, and work patterns contributing to



environmental damage all demand a response from our profession. The call to action was clear: career guidance should not merely help people adapt to change but serve as a lever for sustainability and social justice. This means helping clients reconnect work with values that matter—both personally and collectively.

Making Our Profession Sustainable

A panel discussion on the second day addressed sustainability from another angle: how do we make the profession of career counsellor itself sustainable? Panellists explored the impact of technological developments, including artificial intelligence, on guidance practice. The consensus was nuanced—AI can make counselling more accessible and efficient, but the human element remains irreplaceable.



From left: Cynthia Harrison (Cedefop), Jan Woldendorp (NICE Network), Moderator, Jaana Kettunen (IAEVG), Ilze Jansone (Euroguidance) and Dace Briede-Zālīte (Latvian Career Development Association)

The discussion also touched on professionalization, ethics, and building resilience in a profession where

demands are growing while resources often remain constrained. Creating a future-proof profession investing in practitioner development, establishing clear professional standards, and advocating for recognition of guidance as essential public infrastructure.

Lessons from Riga

The Riga conference reinforced that lifelong guidance is far more than supporting individual choices—it is a powerful tool for navigating a world reshaped by AI, climate change, and globalization. Three key lessons emerged:

- First, career guidance must be understood as essential infrastructure for the Union of Skills, connecting policy ambitions with individual realities.
- Second, sustainability belongs at the heart of guidance practice—helping people find work that is meaningful for them and beneficial for society.
- Third, our profession itself needs nurturing—through professional development, ethical standards, and advocacy for proper recognition and resources.

As we continue building on the momentum of Global Careers Month, the connections made and ideas shared in Riga will resonate throughout our networks. The European guidance community demonstrated its strength and commitment to shaping a more sustainable, equitable future.



Ilze Jansone
Euroguidance Programme Manager,
State Education Development Agency
of Latvia



euro | guidance

CONFERENCE RECORDINGS

Selected sessions were recorded and are available on YouTube Euroguidance Conference 2025 Playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyMB9KFvY5xDDn670Q4srfKMLhTBA0vr5>

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FROM AROUND THE WORLD

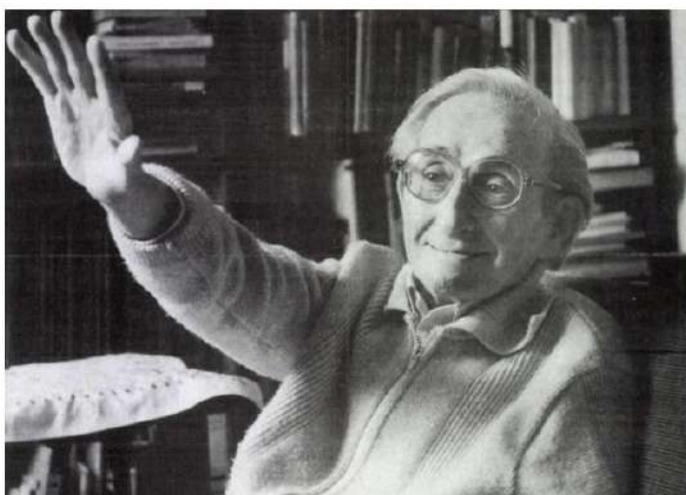


THE UNTOLD STORIES OF CAREER GUIDANCE IN THE CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

by Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze , Marian Crăciun, Tomas Sprlak & Lenka Hloušková

Despite over a century of scholarly and practical contributions, the history and development of career guidance in Central and South-Eastern Europe remain largely unknown internationally. This article uncovers the rich yet overlooked legacy of career guidance in Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, exploring its early theoretical foundations, institutional milestones, and the profound impact of political transitions.

Little is known about contemporary career guidance systems and practices in Central and South-Eastern Europe, which is in absolute contrast to the fact that this scientific field has a history of more than 100 years in the region. This lack of knowledge in the international field is mainly due to linguistic reasons, as few regional publications are written in English and the articles written before the Second World War, mainly in German, French or in national languages have now been forgotten. The early works of authors such as the **Hungarian psychologist** Ferenc Mérei (1942), which are in accordance with the international mainstream literature, are hardly known outside the borders of the region. Moreover, due to the linguistic fragmentation of the region, the four countries presented here do not share a common literature.



Ferenc Mérei (1909–1986) was a highly influential figure in Hungarian psychology and pedagogy.

The work of László Nagy (1857-1931), a Hungarian pedagogue and psychologist, anticipated the later work of developmental career guidance theories (e.g. Super lifespan, life-space approach or Gottfredson Circumscription and Compromise theory) at the

beginning of the 20th century, when he focused his research on interest and the principle of personal development. As he stated, in terms of the evolution of *the soul*, *they are not closed stages...*, *because in the evolution there is a transition from one stage to another, not a sudden jump. However, these developmental stages are not a stage in time, but a characteristic whole of the spiritual functions of certain ages, a type, which is still a closed stage in this sense* (Baranyai 1932 p. 73). Laszlo Nagy thus sets a new task in the education of career interest (Nagy, 1908), the cultivation of interest according to its own nature and guidance, and thus at the same time defines a detail of individual development in learning. (Baranyai, 1932).

In Romania, career guidance had an established tradition even prior to the Second World War; however, this tradition was unfortunately interrupted during the communist era. Horia Pitariu (1997) highlights several significant milestones relevant to our research: the founding of the first experimental psychology laboratory in Iași in 1883; the contributions of Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, particularly his works such as *Psihologia industriasului* (The Psychology of the Enterpriser, 1908), *Curs de psihologie* (Course in Psychology, 1923), and *Vocația, factor hotărâtor în cultura popoarelor* (Vocation, a Decisive Factor in the Culture of Peoples, 1932); and the achievements Florian Ștefănescu-Goangă, who founded the Institute of Comparative and Applied Experimental Psychology in 1922 and published the *Seleționarea capacităților și orientarea profesională* (Selection of Capacities and Career Guidance) in 1929.



Prof. Dr. Horia D. Pitariu (1939-2010)

Between 1935 and 1940, Romania experienced a significant development in the field of career guidance, closely linked to a period of strong economic growth. The increasing demands of industrial and agricultural production called for the scientific organization of labour and the development of human resources. In 1935, the Ministry of Labour established the Psychotechnical Institutes and Professional Orientation Services. These institutes trained professionals in guidance, produced scientific research, and developed psychological testing tools and methods. Professional Orientation Offices, subordinated to the institutes, provided psychological and medical assessments to support educational and vocational (re)orientation for youth and adults. The institutes also engaged in a) research and implementation of new scientific concepts in guidance, b) development of occupational monographs and job lists, c) creation and calibration of psychological assessment tools — including tests for intelligence, technical skills, manual dexterity, temperament, and interests — many of which were only reintroduced in Romania in the last decade.

An important milestone was the publication of Petre Ștefan's *Alegerea profesiunii: omul potrivit la loc potrivit* (Choosing a Profession: The Right Person in the Right Place) in 1941. The author approached career guidance and counselling from historical, social, political, psychological, and sociological perspectives, illustrating the development of a coherent and efficient system that facilitated the transition from school to the labour market.

After 1944, the establishment of the communist regime radically changed the perception of work and diminished the importance of career guidance and counselling, aligning them with the party-state ideology. Psychotechnical institutes and academic publications continued research, but the focus shifted to forced job placement rather than vocational compatibility. Educational pathways were severely restricted, technical universities were favoured over humanities and job placement was determined by state assignment rather than merit or personal choice. Many Romanians over the age of 50 still idealise this system due to job security, overlooking the lack of personal development, the ban on private initiative, and the near impossibility of career change.

After 1989, the collapse of the centralised economy and rising unemployment highlighted the urgent need for career guidance and counselling services. The absence of a coherent policy delayed the development of such services, while many skilled Romanians emigrated, often accepting jobs below their qualification level. The new, unpredictable labour market required greater adaptability and the ability to make flexible career decisions. Starting in the 1990s, psycho-pedagogical assistance centres, information centres for students, and eventually, in 1999, the National Agency for Employment (NAE) were established as key public providers of adult career counselling. Although career guidance began to redevelop, challenges remain in the face of an unstable labour market and a population with high economic dependency.

During the former Czechoslovakia era, founder and promoter of guidance centres for vocational choice, Juliana Lancová (1878-1962), stood out for her methodical work for vocational guidance practitioners (1925) and practice non-psychology vocational guidance. Key stepping stone in the development of career guidance theory and practice in Central and Eastern Europe — particularly **in Slovakia and the former Czechoslovakia** — was Slovak, psychologist, Jozef Koščo. As the architect of the national system of school and professional guidance, Koščo introduced and developed the concept of biodromal guidance in the 1960s, grounded in developmental psychology and conceived as a lifelong support for individuals across the phases of their educational and professional trajectories. His work anticipated by several decades the now widespread European discourse on lifelong guidance. In his seminal publication (1971), Koščo proposed a form of guidance that not only supports immediate decisions but also helps to interpret and integrate past

Experiences while planning for a sustainable and meaningful future. His approach positioned counselling psychology as a distinct, applied discipline contributing both to personal development and social adaptation.

International recognition of his vision culminated in the 1970 UNESCO regional expert meeting in Bratislava, which he conceptually led and marked one of the earliest international articulations of guidance as an essential component of lifelong learning systems.



Jozef Koščo, CSc. (1920–2018) was a Slovak psychologist and university teacher who significantly contributed to the development of counselling psychology.

When getting acquainted with the contemporary career guidance systems, services and research of Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, valuable insights can be found in resources such as the national career guidance system descriptions of the CEDEFOP CareersNet,

pre-accession research reports (ETF, 2003) and more recent articles (Watts & Borbély-Pecze, 2011). Nevertheless, until our cooperation began, the exchange of professional information between these neighbouring countries— despite their geographical proximity and in some cases shared linguistic roots — remained surprisingly limited. The Czech-Slovak connection was a notable exception. Against this background, we launched a collaborative exploratory research designed to bridge these gaps and build a more connected understanding of career guidance developments across the region.

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Dr. Lenka Hloušková, an assistant professor at the Institute of Pedagogy and Counseling at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague.



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STRENGTHENING CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC AND BEYOND: REFLECTIONS FROM VIETNAM

by Tuan Anh Le

As part of Global Career Month, Asia Pacific Career Development Association (APCDA) convened a panel from across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond to explore the future of career development. As a practitioner working in Vietnam, I found the discussion particularly relevant not only for understanding global trends but also for imagining how Vietnam can strengthen its own career development ecosystem.

The session highlighted four key themes: the societal value of career development, the professionalisation of practitioners, workforce upskilling and reskilling, and the growing connection between career development and mental health.

Career Development as a Foundation for Economic and Social Progress

Across the panel, there was consensus that career development is no longer a standalone service. It is a strategic lever for supporting economic vitality, social cohesion, and human empowerment.

Arun Mittal from India described career development as positioned at the intersection of economic restructuring, social transition, and human aspiration. His insight captures the complexity facing many countries today: automation, green transformation, shifting industries, and rising entrepreneurial mindsets. When career guidance is embedded into national systems, individuals become more resilient, and labour markets operate more effectively.

From Japan, Yoshimi Sasaki emphasized the challenges of rapid technological change and demographic shifts. Many young workers lack long-term career vision and feel insecure about their future. Her reminder to return to three core questions: What do I want? What can I do? What is needed for a sustainable future?, reinforces the importance of reflective practice as a stabilising force amid uncertainty.

Reframing Career Development Across the Life Course

A major theme emerged from Dr. Soon-Joo Gog's

contribution: career development must be reframed as a lifelong capability, not a one-time intervention. Singapore's "career health" movement aims to ensure that every worker regardless of education level or industry can plan, adapt, and transition throughout longer and more unpredictable working lives.

This approach recognizes that workers frequently navigate job redesign, technological integration, and role transitions. Employers therefore play an important role in creating internal mobility pathways, supporting learning, and prioritising skills-first thinking.

Equity, Mental Health, and Sustainability in Career Practice

Several panelists emphasized that modern career development must integrate human well-being and social equity.

Dr. Candy Ho from Canada highlighted the growing importance of belonging, agency, and equitable access to guidance especially in contexts of migration, reconciliation, and climate disruption. Her perspective that "every job must now be seen as a green job" underscores the importance of sustainability and reskilling as cross-cutting priorities across the region.

From the United States, Carolyn Jones reminded practitioners that career development affects far more than employment outcomes. When individuals do not have decent work, fair wages, or psychologically safe environments, sustainability and long-term well-being are compromised. Advocacy is therefore a professional obligation one that involves institutions, communities, and policy systems.



A Shared Vision for the Region

Although panelists represented diverse national contexts, their insights converged around several priorities for the Asia-Pacific:

- Elevating career development as essential public infrastructure
- Strengthening practitioner professionalization and standards
- Scaling upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all workers
- Integrating mental health considerations into career services
- Ensuring equity for marginalized or underserved groups
- Preparing workforces for green and digital transitions

Together, these point toward a future where career development is embedded into national agendas, employer practices, and lifelong learning cultures.

Application to Vietnam: Building a Future-Ready Career Ecosystem

Vietnam faces many similar dynamics: fast-paced digitalization, a young workforce seeking direction, and widening skill disparities. The insights from this webinar suggest several pathways for strengthening Vietnam's career ecosystem:

- **Promote lifelong career development literacy.** Vietnam's services remain concentrated in schools. Expanding guidance for adults, career shifters, and mid-career learners would align with international best practice.

- **Support employers especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in career pathway design.** Like Japan, many Vietnamese SMEs lack structured talent development, even though they employ much of the workforce.
- **Integrate career development with mental health awareness.** Young professionals increasingly face stress, uncertainty, and burnout. Incorporating mental-health-informed practices could improve client outcomes.
- **Prioritise equity and access.** This includes women returning to work after caregiving, rural populations, displaced workers, and people with disabilities.
- **Prepare for green transformation.** Career practitioners can help workers understand how sustainability and climate adaptation will shape labour markets and skills demand in the coming decade.

This webinar reaffirmed how interconnected our work has become and why collaboration across borders is important. As Vietnam continues its economic and educational transformation, insights from the Asia-Pacific region offer both guidance and inspiration. Career development, when positioned as a public good, can support human potential and contribute to a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for all.

Le Tuan Anh,
Career Consultant,
AV Careers



ARTICLES FROM THE IJEVG

By Sachin Kumar

The International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance publishes articles relating to career development, career counselling and guidance and career education, which have broad international interest, including comparative studies, cross cultural studies etc, which all contribute to both theory and practice relevant in today's world. This article is a summary of the twelve articles which were published in Vol 25 Issue 1 (2025).



This collection of studies highlight the expanding scope, complexity, and social relevance of contemporary career guidance across the lifespan. Spanning diverse populations, national contexts, and methodological approaches, the articles underscore how career development is shaped by structural conditions, psychosocial resources, and evolving labour markets.

Several contributions foreground equity, vulnerability, and social justice in career guidance. Papers on refugees, women survivors of childhood abuse, postdoctoral researchers, and preschool education students illustrate how careers are embedded in social systems, power relations, and lived experiences. These studies argue for guidance that moves beyond narrow job placement or individual choice to address trauma, marginalisation, professional socialisation, and gendered pathways.

A second cluster focuses on career adaptability, values, and self-directed careers. Research on protean and traditional career orientations, self-

regulation processes, entrepreneurial competence, and vocational students' decision-making highlights how individuals navigate uncertainty through motivation, planning, learning, and values clarification. These papers offer nuanced insights into how agency and security coexist in modern careers.

The issue also contributes to measurement, systems, and policy development. Validation studies of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale and the Relationship to Work Questionnaire expand the assessment toolkit available to practitioners and researchers across cultures. Complementing this, articles on lifelong guidance systems development and children's career aspiration interventions adopt a macro perspective, drawing attention to leadership, coordination, and early intervention in response to labour market change.

Taken together, the papers in this issue reflect the breadth of career guidance today—from early childhood to advanced academic careers, and from individual counselling to system- level design.

Readers are invited to engage with the full articles to access detailed findings, contextual analyses, and practice-relevant insights that can inform effective, ethical, and future-oriented career guidance.

Across the papers, several recurring themes emerge about what effective, ethical, and future-oriented career guidance now requires. At its core is the recognition that the quality of career services is inseparable from the competence of those who deliver them. While career guidance is increasingly expected to respond to complex social challenges, professional preparation and regulation remain uneven. The texts point to the need for sustained upskilling of practitioners, particularly for work with specific populations such as refugees, trauma survivors, vocational students, and early-career researchers. Broad commitments to diversity and inclusion are insufficient on their own; Practitioners need access to research-informed, specialised knowledge that translates theory into credible, context-sensitive practice.

The articles also reinforce the importance of theory as a bridge between research and practice. Career development does not occur in isolation, and approaches that acknowledge culture, context, and structural constraints are essential. Systems-based and narrative frameworks help practitioners make sense of complex labour market transitions, social inequities, and disrupted life trajectories. At the same time, the limits

of theories developed in Western contexts are acknowledged, prompting practitioners to critically adapt and combine theoretical perspectives rather than apply them unreflectively.

Another recurring theme concerns the redefinition of "successful outcomes." An overemphasis on rapid job placement—often driven by funding requirements—risks trapping individuals in low-quality, insecure work and overlooking long-term career development. The texts argue for a shift towards valuing career readiness, adaptability, sustainability, and the quality of employment. For many clients, especially those facing trauma or displacement, narrative and relational approaches are shown to restore agency, strengthen identity, and support resilience by helping individuals connect past experiences, present realities, and future aspirations.

Finally, career development is portrayed as both relational and lifelong. Social capital, mentoring, cooperation, and supportive institutional cultures shape career intentions alongside individual motivation. From early childhood through adulthood, guidance systems must be coherent, collaborative, and future-focused, equipping individuals not just to choose work, but to navigate change.

Taken together, these themes underscore a shared message: effective career guidance demands skilled practitioners, theory-informed and context-aware practice, and systems that prioritise meaningful, sustainable careers over short-term outcomes.

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We'd like to remind that full access to the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IJEVG)* is included as part of your membership.

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As an IAEVG member, you have exclusive access to the journal through your association membership. To read the latest issues, log in to the IAEVG website at www.iaevg.com. Once logged in, navigate to the "Members" section by clicking on the three-bar icon at the top right of the menu and select "IJEVG."

WHAT IS GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR COMPETENCY ?

Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors' 50th Anniversary Conference



By Nina Ahlroos

This question took centre stage at the annual conference of the Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors, held in Stockholm on 23–24 October 2025. The event was special in several ways: it marked the 50th anniversary of the association, it was the first time the conference was co-organised with Euroguidance Sweden, and it took place as part of the international Global Careers Month.

Bringing together national and international experts and practitioners, the conference created a good setting to reflect on how career guidance is evolving — and what competencies professionals need in a rapidly changing world.

A profession in motion

Across keynotes, panels, and discussions, one theme repeatedly emerged: guidance today is both broader and more demanding than ever. Guidance counsellors work at the intersection of personal aspirations, social structures, labour market dynamics, institutional expectations, and ethical considerations.

Veteran members and moderators Agneta Söderlund and Anders Lovén, together with association president Katarina Petersson, opened the event by reflecting on how the

profession has transformed since the 1970s. Anders described guidance practitioners as "multi-instrumentalists" navigating the crosswinds between institutions, policy, and individual needs. Time constraints in schools and persistent questioning of the profession's relevance add further complexity, making professional competency not merely desirable but essential.

International perspectives on competence development

Jaana Kettunen from the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, presented Finland's national competency framework, developed through co-creation with practitioners from various sectors. The framework identifies three core areas of competence:

1. professionalism,
2. client work, and
3. systemic competence.

Practical tools such as self-assessment grids and development plans help practitioners and organisations articulate and address competence needs. Notably, the framework is not tied to any specific theory or sector — it offers a shared language for guidance across the public sphere.

Career guidance for social justice

Rie Thomsen from Aarhus University highlighted the growing international emphasis on social justice in guidance. She stressed that guidance is always situated within social and political structures.

She distinguished between functionalist, humanistic, and critical–emancipatory approaches — the latter helping clients recognise structural barriers and broaden their sense of agency. Examples from Sweden, Denmark, and beyond illustrated how norm-critical and intersectional methods can deepen the profession's social mission.



Anders Lovén, one of the founding board member of the association.

The compensatory mission

A panel of trainers from the three institutions offering career guidance education in Sweden, discussed the compensatory mission of Swedish guidance — originally aimed at reducing inequality related to class, gender, and social background. While today’s debates often focus on diagnoses, migration, and individual challenges, speakers argued for renewed understanding of how societal structures shape educational and career opportunities. Working for social justice, they noted, does not always mean “fixing” individuals. It can also mean challenging unjust systems, reducing shame, and making guidance accessible to those who need it most.

Recognition as pedagogical and ethical practice

Drawing on Axel Honneth’s philosophy, Fredrik Herzberg from Stockholm University explored the role of recognition in guidance: acknowledging individuals not only for who they are, but for who they can become. Recognition contributes to dignity, autonomy, and equality — foundational conditions for meaningful career development. Yet it also has boundaries, particularly when cultural norms conflict with human rights.

The need for green guidance

Tristram Hooley (University of Derby) emphasised that the climate emergency makes green guidance an urgent professional responsibility. As labour markets shift toward sustainability, guidance must help clients develop green skills, understand environmental change, imagine future possibilities, and contribute to systemic transformation — without placing all responsibility on individuals.

A diverse set of seminars

The second day offered diverse seminars exploring different dimensions of practice. Participants could engage with topics ranging from AI in career guidance to community-based approaches that embed counselling in everyday environments beyond formal systems.



President Katarina Petersson receives congratulations on the association’s 50th anniversary from IAEVG President Jaana Kettunen.

National developments

Several seminars also addressed current national developments. For example, Nina Ahlroos from the Swedish Council for Higher Education and Mikaela Zelmerlöw from the National Agency for Education presented a proposal for a national infrastructure for lifelong guidance. Colleagues from the same Agencies explored the role of guidance in meeting Sweden’s growing STEM competence needs and provided clarity on the upcoming education reform Gy25, bringing changes to subject-based grading.

The central role of guidance

Throughout the conference, the 50-year history of the Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors served as a reminder of how far the profession has come — and how central it remains to people’s lives and to society. The 2025 conference made clear that guidance counsellor competency is not a fixed set of skills but an evolving professional landscape — one that practitioners continue to shape together, across institutions and national borders.



Nina Ahlroos, IAEVG National Correspondent Sweden

INCLUSIVE CAREER GUIDANCE: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

by Margit Rammo

This article builds on discussions from the Inclusive Career Guidance: Supporting Students with Special Needs event, held in Tallinn, Estonia in June 2025, which highlighted the role of career guidance as an inclusion mechanism. The reflections that follow capture the collective voice of career guidance professionals from across Europe who participated in the event, and aim to support the development of more inclusive and future-oriented career guidance practices.

Career guidance is crucial for supporting students from vulnerable groups, helping them gain the skills needed in the labour market and prevent early school leaving. It is important to offer diverse role models, tailored support, and culturally responsive practices to ensure equal access to meaningful career.

Inclusive mobility is becoming an important focus in European education and labour policies. Career guidance professionals have a valuable opportunity to play an active role in helping all students, particularly those with fewer opportunities, access international experiences and make smooth transitions in their learning and careers.

Advancing inclusive career guidance

Participants highlighted several areas for attention. First, career professionals should start with the individual's needs, taking the time to understand their goals, strengths, and background. This approach builds trust and allows for tailored support. It is also essential for career professionals to be trusted and accessible, offering consistent support and acting as a stable point of contact throughout the process.

Providing personalized support through trained professionals is crucial, as it ensures that guidance meets diverse needs. Involving parents and other key figures in the young person's life can strengthen the guidance process and increase its effectiveness. Additionally, career professionals should receive flexible and practical training that blends real-life experience with theory, adapting to different situations.

Encouraging innovation and sharing best

practices among professionals is important for continuous improvement within the field. Finally, career guidance should not end once a young person enters the workforce. Ongoing support helps them navigate challenges, express their needs, and build confidence as they grow in their careers.

Inclusive mobility and career guidance

Learning mobility is increasingly recognized as a tool for personal and career development across Europe. The EU's 2030 target aims for at least 20% of all learners to participate in mobility abroad, with a focus on those facing economic, disability, health, cultural, or educational barriers. Mobility can be transformative, but many students still lack the support needed to participate fully. Career guidance is essential to ensure that learners, especially those with fewer opportunities, can benefit from these experiences, enhancing their personal growth, employability, and global competence.

Inclusive career guidance contributes to making mobility accessible and meaningful for all. It helps widen access to underrepresented groups, supports reflection and articulation of competencies gained, and can help to ensure that mobility becomes a tool for equity rather than privilege.

Inclusive mobility can be understood through three key phases, as outlined by Sören Kristensen: preparation, where counsellors help students explore their motivations, provide information, and ensure practical and financial support; support during mobility, offering mentoring and regular check-ins; and follow-up, where students reflect on their experiences and identify acquired skills to support their career development.

To enhance inclusive mobility, participants suggested



providing guidance professionals with relevant training, offering flexible mobility formats, clarifying funding opportunities, and focusing on the development of transferable skills throughout the mobility process.

Meaningful use of digital technologies in career guidance

To ensure the meaningful use of digital technologies in the future, the career guidance community needs to approach technology with both caution and creativity. Digital tools can enhance career guidance but should never replace human interaction or common sense. Authentic relationships between professionals and learners remain at the core of effective support.

Given the pace of technological change, career professionals should regularly update their digital skills. Continuous training is important to stay up-to-date and provide effective guidance in a more digital world. While they do not need to know everything, professionals should be resourceful and know where to access the appropriate tools and support when needed.

Involving career guidance professionals in the development of digital tools is essential. These tools need to be practical, relevant, and designed to meet real-world guidance needs. Since young people are often more familiar with digital spaces, professionals should move from being "teachers" to "supporters," guiding them through the digital world and staying in tune with their needs.

As countries start to integrate digital technologies into career guidance systems, professionals will need to adjust and adapt. It is important for them to embrace these changes and use digital tools in a thoughtful and meaningful way, beyond simply meeting formal requirements. By doing so, technology can become a valuable resource in the career guidance process, complementing and enhancing the human support that remains at its core.

Conclusions

Practitioners gathered in Tallinn shared a common focus and highlighted that: future career guidance should focus on inclusion and the thoughtful use of digital technologies. Career guidance professionals play a significant role in supporting vulnerable students, helping them develop key skills for the labour market and preventing early school leaving. It is essential to provide access to diverse opportunities, including international mobility, while ensuring that digital tools complement, rather than replace, the human aspect of guidance.

Margit Rammo
Euroguidance Manager at Education
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FAROE ISLANDS

Julianna Deirdre Hansen, Career guidance counsellor, Kambsdal College, Faroe Islands



Career Education in Faroese Compulsory Schools: A Small State Perspective

By Julianna Deirdre Hansen

The Faroe Islands, a self-governing North Atlantic archipelago with approximately 54,000 inhabitants, offers insights into how international education policy and Nordic cooperation shape Career Education in small states. The islands operate within governance structures influenced by global and regional frameworks, while maintaining responsibility for their own education system.

Legislative provisions including the Act of Compulsory School and the Executive Order on Guidance in Compulsory School (Fólkaskúalógin, 2025) mandate Career Education in Faroese schools. Career guidance counsellors work across the islands supporting young people in navigating educational and vocational pathways. However, despite these mandates, implementation remains fragmented, with schools lacking coherent strategies and comprehensive curricula for Career Education.

The Faroese context illustrates how global norms filter through European and Nordic frameworks before reaching local systems, creating hybrid outcomes shaped by the interaction between international agendas and local realities. Nordic collaboration, including participation in the NordForsk NOS-HS Career Education initiative and the Nordic Network for Lifelong Learning since 2015, promotes research and dialogue across the region. These networks provide valuable comparative perspectives, yet local uptake of recommendations remains limited, constrained by domestic priorities and institutional capacity.

Two key tensions characterize the Faroese situation. First, gaps persist between policy aspiration and practical enactment, where legislative mandates exist without corresponding strategic frameworks. Second, aligning international and Nordic

frameworks with local governance structures proves challenging. Reliance on external models risks overlooking cultural nuances specific to small island communities, contributing to fragmented implementation.

Demographic changes add further complexity. Approximately 3,500 newcomers have settled in the Faroe Islands over two decades, highlighting needs for recognition of prior learning and inclusive guidance services supporting diverse populations.

Moving forward, strengthening Career Education in the Faroe Islands requires integrated strategies that respect local context while leveraging Nordic best practices. The Faroese experience demonstrates both the potential and the challenges small states face in translating international policy frameworks into meaningful local practice.

FURTHER READING

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FRANCE

Laurent Sovet, PhD., Associate professor in differential psychology, LaPEA, Université Paris Cité, Université Gustave, France.



Career Management Skills: A Competency Framework in Secondary Education in France

By Laurent Sovet

In France, ONISEP, the National Office for Information on Education and Professions, is a public agency under the Ministry of National Education (MEN) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR). It provides students, families, and educators with reliable guidance on educational pathways, training opportunities, and career choices. Within this mission, ONISEP coordinates the Programme Avenir(s). Running from 2021 to 2030 with a budget of €30 million, this national project aims to support young people (pupils, students, and apprentices) in developing their skills and building their educational and lifelong career paths. In this context, ONISEP established a collaboration with the Laboratory of Applied Psychology and Ergonomics (LaPEA), affiliated with Paris Cité University and Gustave Eiffel University, to develop and implement a competency framework for career management skills (CMS) in secondary education, as part of the Programme Avenir(s).

The construction of the competency framework followed a participatory action-research approach and was structured around three main phases. The first phase involved a scientific study conducted with pupils, educators, and career practitioners to provide a contextualized understanding of the CMS pupils need to build their educational and lifelong career paths. The second phase focused on the progressive development of content through collaborative activities and workshops with pupils, educators, and career practitioners, during which the key CMS were identified, discussed, and refined. Finally, the third phase centered on drafting the competency framework itself, drawing on all the data collected and the insights generated through these interactions. In this process, around 8,000 pupils and 750 educators and career practitioners were engaged between 2021 and 2024.

The high school version of the competency framework, published in June 2022, comprises 15 CMS organized into three clusters, while the middle school version, published in December 2024, includes 14. An updated edition of the high school framework, along with an English translation, will be released by the end of 2025. The two versions share a common structure and a core set of CMS, ensuring continuity and coherence across the different stages of secondary education. Together, these frameworks establish a consistent foundation for career education in France.

FURTHER READING

<https://www.onisep.fr/avenir-s/>

<https://reso-avenirs.onisep.fr/>

INDIA

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The AI crossroads in India: Strategic Roadmap for Job Creation and Reskilling Tech Workforce

By Zahoor Ahmad Yattoo



The recently released Roadmap for Job Creation in the AI Economy by NITI Aayog in partnership with NASSCOM and the Boston Consulting Group suggests that overall job creation will outpace job losses attributable to artificial intelligence, presenting a decisive implication for professionals navigating a rapidly changing labour market. Current disruptions in India's IT sector, including substantial workforce reductions at major firms, illustrate the immediate pressure: the IT services giant Tata Consulting Services reported a reduction of nearly 20,000 employees in one quarter, and other firms such as Infosys, Tech Mahindra, and Wipro have also implemented major restructuring. Projections indicate over 50,000 tech roles may be at risk in 2025, more than double the figure affected during 2023–24.

Why This Report Matters NOW

The timing of this roadmap is critical, particularly given the recent developments in the US job market. In September 2025, the US government imposed a \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visa petitions, effective September 21, 2025. This dramatic policy shift, coupled with plans to prioritize higher wage positions in the H-1B lottery, fundamentally alters the calculus for Indian IT professionals who traditionally relied on overseas opportunities and poses operational challenges to the tech companies that hired talent from India.

Job Risk and Emerging Categories

The report estimates that approximately 60% of formal sector occupations face automation risk by 2030, while concurrently identifying three emergent job categories driven by AI: Enterprise AI skills (for example, AI architects and ethical AI specialists), Frontier AI skills (such as quantum machine learning and neurohaptics), and AI-for-AI roles (researchers developing advanced language models). These

categories underscore both displacement risks and avenues for upward mobility within the sector.

Implications for Career Counseling

Two practical priorities emerge for career development professionals. First, AI fluency is essential for all workers; counsel should prioritize rapid acquisition of basic AI literacy and guidance for high-risk groups, junior engineers, frontline support, and routine coders to transition toward L2/L3 or AI-augmented roles within an approximately six-year window (2025–2031). Second, reskilling must be strategic rather than generic. Reported layoffs often reflect skill mismatches rather than demand collapse, signaling the need to align existing competencies with AI-enhanced role requirements, for example, teaching data architects model-training pipelines, AI governance, and AI-assisted design practices.

Conclusion

AI is already transforming work. The outcome for India becoming a global AI talent hub or experiencing substantial job erosion will depend on coordinated reskilling, targeted career guidance, and systemic policy responses. Career counselors and job strategists play a central role in ensuring professionals migrate to the opportunity side of this transformation.

FURTHER READING

<https://niti.gov.in/whats-new/roadmap-job-creation-ai-economy>

Advancing India's AI Skills: Interventions and programmes needed (2024). Nasscom Deloitte report.



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