

Career Developments

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Canadian Career Development Foundation

The career development community in Canada has made great strides this year, with an unprecedented investment in targeted research, a significantly stronger evidence base and a renewed commitment to training/professional development, accountability, collaboration and cohesion across the field. The career development landscape is changing in dramatic and exciting ways. For the first time in our history, we now have:

- Comprehensive data from a pan-Canadian mapping study of the career development sector, revealing the composition of our workforce, our professional preparation and training needs, our views with respect to certification, the dominant needs of our clients and the scope of services provided;
- An emerging body of evidence demonstrating the value of career services, including longitudinal studies, and evaluation framework and associated tools to support consistent data-gathering;
- A cadre of researchers (CRWG: Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development) committed to continuing to “prove our worth”;
- Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S & Gs), heralded internationally as a model internationally by the OECD and the basis for standards established by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG);
- The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, articulating end-user outcomes;
- A project underway to determine the state of practice with respect to standards for quality career service delivery both nationally and internationally;
- Provincial career development professional associations and/or action groups established in Newfoundland/Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Québec, Ontario, Alberta/Northwest Territories and British Columbia;
- Certification initiatives, including the EVGP certification offered by the IAEVG as well as provincial certification programs in Québec, Alberta and British Columbia. More are emerging in other provinces;
- Comprehensive and proven competency-based training programs, grounded in the S & Gs and pre-approved as eligible for international certification;
- The Canadian Council of Career Development Associations (CCCCA), bringing together the executives of provincial/territorial career development associations and action groups to build dialogue, collaboration and cohesion around shared priorities, such as certification, training and the S & Gs;
- The Career Development Services Working Group of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, a representative provincial/territorial-federal government forum with a mandate to raise the quality and effectiveness of career development services; and
- A solid international reputation and commitment to advancing career development both nationally and internationally.

Read on to find out more!



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- The **Forum of Labour Market Ministers' Career Development Services Working Group (FLMM-CDSWG)** hosted a **Pan-Canadian Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy** in October 2009. The theme of the Symposium was: "*Advancing Career Development Public Policy: The crucial impacts of providing career and employment services in Canada's shifting labour market*". The symposium brought together policy makers, practitioners and researchers to discuss coherent and coordinated approaches in the development and delivery of career and employment services.

The objectives of the symposium were to:

- Highlight the impact of career development in today's labour market;
- Share career development strategies/best practices being developed across Canada;
- Develop relationships and linkages among and between various Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministries;
- Build awareness and understanding of the work of the Career Development Services Working Group (CDSWG).

The intended outcomes included:

- Confirm understanding of the career development challenges facing Provincial and Territorial jurisdictions in Canada;
- Communicate a common understanding of career development at various levels and Ministries;
- Share the findings of four CDSWG projects; and
- Identify actions for the 2010-2013 CDSWG action plan.

Visit www.flmm-cds.ca for more on the Working Group and this Symposium.

- The **5th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy** was held in New Zealand in November. Following the Symposium, a communiqué was sent to all participating countries. It provides context for the symposium, summarizes its key outcomes and sets directions for action for country teams and for the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) before the next Symposium—to be held in Hungary in 2011.

One key outcome of the Symposium is that the Canadian team, with support from the Australian, Finnish and USA teams, plan to lead the follow up

activities relating to the 'Prove it Works' theme. In addition to this, the Canada Team has identified several other tentative priorities and will be drafting an action plan in the New Year.

The Symposium communiqué and Canada Team report may be found at www.ccdf.ca. You may also visit www.iccdpp.org for more on the International Symposium and other developments on the policy front.

- In Canada, we have had virtually no data on the career development sector—its hiring practices, training/professional development trends, human resource challenges, composition and needs of clients it serves, and the extent to which jurisdictions are applying competency profiles such as the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S & Gs). The FLMM CDSWG undertook to fill this void, engaging the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) to map the career development sector across Canada. A **Pan-Canadian Mapping Study of the Career Development Sector** has been completed. A few highlights follow:
 - Career Development has a well-defined scope of practice, with a clear employment, career and labour market mandate;
 - Older workers make up a large portion of the clients served (53% English; 27% French).
 - Overall, emerging approaches (such as self-management/self-marketing approaches and/or group interventions appear to be used infrequently;
 - Criteria-based services appear to be the norm and full and free access to services the exception;
 - Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) come from diverse work histories and educational backgrounds and they come to career and employment services as a second or third occupational stop in their careers. They are a very well educated population. The field is dominantly female and the level of job satisfaction is very high. At the same time the field is weakly specialized in formal career development through either pre-service or on-the-job training. *Access to professional training is the highest rated priority by Career Development Practitioners for future directions needed in the sector, and the second highest ranked priority by managers;*

- There is an evident movement towards wanting more professional recognition in the form of certification or licensing processes;
- There is little to no consistency in the requirements for jobs within the sector. This represents a major challenge for the professional identity of the sector;
- Job titles exist for the majority of Career Development Practitioners but there is very little consistency in job titles, particularly among English practitioners. This represents a further challenge for professional identity and coherence across the sector;
- There is strong agreement among Career Development Practitioners on the competencies needed for effective practice. There is also recognition of the need for additional competencies in emerging competency areas including cross-cultural counselling, use of advanced technology and credential evaluation.

Five priorities for action are suggested as follows:

1. *Promote and enhance a Training and Development Culture within the sector.*
 2. *Promote increased understanding and use of competency frameworks such as the Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S & Gs) and the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs or their equivalencies as tools to increase coherence in the sector.*
 3. *Support provincial and territorial initiatives to introduce certification programs for Career Development Practitioners and a mechanism to support their compatibility and ensure cross border mobility.*
 4. *Conduct a policy review of criterion-based career development and employment services.*
 5. *Conduct a survey of public need for, access to and satisfaction with current career and employment service provision.*
- A **Survey on the Use of Assessment Processes** was recently conducted to explore the use of assessment processes, models, and tools in career services across Canada. The research was conducted by Life Strategies Ltd., on behalf of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Career Development Services Working Group. In total there were 367 respondents to the survey (339 English; 28 French). Respondents represented each Province and Territory and primarily worked in

government-funded community-based programs or in services provided directly by the government. For more information, visit www.flmm-cds.ca.

- A project is just underway to increase our understanding of current career development practice in regards to **Quality Standards in Service Delivery**. It will gather data on existing models, both nationally and internationally, identifying the resources required for effective implementation, mechanisms in place to measure standards and indicators of impact and effectiveness.

The development of standards and guidelines for quality services delivery must cover critical issues including:

- Options for use;
- Impacts on service quality;
- Implications of development, implementation and monitoring of standards and guidelines; and
- Strengths and limitations of possible models.

This has been a missing link in Canada and we expect the results of this study will inform policy development as well as practice. For more information, contact the CCDF (www.ccdf.ca).

- A study has been initiated to examine the **Impact of Labour Market Information** on client outcomes related to career decision-making and work search. Objectives include:

- To examine the state of practice in Canada regarding how client needs for LMI are assessed and how LMI is actually provided;
- To compare the impact of LMI when it is used independently versus with practitioner support;
- To explore in detail the actual client experience with using LMI.

Focusing on adult workers seeking assistance with career decision-making or job search, it is anticipated that this study will enhance our understanding of the potential role of LMI in career service delivery. For more information, contact CCDF (www.ccdf.ca).

- The **Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation** commissioned a pan-Canadian study of career development practices in K-12 public schools. Almost 500 guidance counsellors from across Canada completed a self-administered online survey coupled

with an online log tracking their time allocation over three consecutive days. The results at a national level show a well-educated population, but not necessarily in the field of guidance and counselling. For the most part, emerging approaches to service delivery—such as group interventions, outreach to parents and/or workshop approaches—are not widely used. It also revealed a significant lack of consistency nationally with respect to service delivery standards and professional preparation of guidance counsellors. The study results point to important recommendations with respect to policy and practice.

- New Brunswick has completed a 3-year training strategy for all employment counsellors in the province. The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour began with a comprehensive needs assessment, including having every staff person complete Taking Charge—an online self-assessment of mastery against the S & Gs. Priority gaps were identified and grouped, resulting in the development of seven targeted competency-based courses. These courses have been pre-approved as meeting the criteria for EVGP certification through the IAEVG and have resulted in significant impacts on staff confidence, competence, satisfaction and client service. These courses are currently being used as a foundation to build a culturally-grounded 11-course Career Development Certificate Program which is being offered at Nunavut Arctic College. Most recently, Newfoundland and Labrador have initiated a province-wide needs assessment and are initiating a training strategy to respond to staff training needs. These programs are high quality, grounded in service delivery realities, tied strongly to application of learning in the workplace and freely available to any provincial/territorial government seeking to provide training/professional development to its career service staff. For more information, contact s.hopkins@ccdf.ca.
- In late 2008, members of the Executives of several provincial career development professional associations and other interested partners began exploring the possibility of developing some form of Pan-Canadian Career Development mechanism to promote communication and collaboration among existing provincial/territorial associations. Those involved in the preliminary discussions were the Alberta Career Development Association, the BC Career Management Association, the Canadian Career Development Foundation, ENET, Life Strategies Ltd., and the Ontario Alliance of Career Development Practitioners.

A total of 30 associations, action groups, and organizations participated in initial consultations, including a survey, online discussion forum and/or face-to-face meeting (held in January 2009). The key outcome of the meeting was the recommendation to establish the **Canadian Council of Career Development Associations (CCDA)**. This group brings together associations and action groups with the over-arching goal of promoting stronger professional identity across the career development field. Under this broad goal, three initial priorities were identified as follows:

- Provide access to clear information regarding certification initiatives and associated training via an online clearinghouse;
- Provide a mechanism for increased communication and collaboration among involved groups regarding certification with the goal of simplifying, streamlining, and promoting practitioner mobility;
- Provide a mechanism to keep the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners current and vital.

Over the past few months, this group has initiated a call for input as an initial step toward revitalizing the S & Gs. At the time of writing, input was being analyzed and priorities established for revisions/new content.

It is hoped that the CCDA will convene a face-to-face meeting in March, immediately following the CDC conference. The goals of this meeting will be to formalize the terms of reference, decide on sub-committees, agree to a strategic plan of action and begin the work of the Council in earnest. For more information on the revitalization of the S & Gs or on the CCDA, please contact CCDF (www.ccdf.ca).