

Career Developments

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Canadian Career Development Foundation

LOOK TO THE NORTH! Lifespan Approaches to Career Development Service Delivery Frameworks

In 2001, the Northwest Territories Government passed a Departmental Directive for Career Development across the Lifespan. It was the first time in Canada that a province or territory had developed a framework that made the connection to a developmental model of career service and and citizen health and capacity for resiliency. The NWT framework for career service across the lifespan was a powerful vision allowing citizens of all ages to have opportunities to:

- ◆ Build foundational career management skills;
- ◆ Develop intentional career plans;
- ◆ Manage smoother transitions from one life-role to another; and
- ◆ Know where and how to access services throughout their lives.

The lifespan approach has been adapted by two other provinces (Alberta and Manitoba) and another northern neighbour: Nunavut.¹ This latter example is about to become policy and it will bookend 10 years of such policy frameworks in Canada. Nunavut's framework is featured in this article for its unique cultural development and as an example of a lifewide approach to policy development across the lifespan.

Before exploring the Nunavut example, you might ask: "What is a policy framework and why is it important to career service delivery?" A policy framework is a conceptual structure for mapping the implementation of a project or a



strategy. It contains a vision statement, guiding principles and, in the case of a career development framework, a model for service. The framework guides the development of the strategy and can be used as a touchstone in the development and evaluation of all its elements. It can be responsive to the cultural, social, economic realities of a jurisdiction. It also guides resource allocation and provides a rationale for services and programs implemented. It can also help to rationalize service and ideally supports a proactive response to changes in the labour

market. It helps to guide and tailor services to the realities of the jurisdiction in which they are delivered.

Nunavut's framework is a true model of a lifespan approach to developing career services. From the beginning, policy-makers and practitioners wanted to develop something that would help Nunavummiut to meaningfully contribute to their communities and territory. They liked the idea of career development, but not many fully understood the field. So as a first step, policy-makers and practitioners came together to attend a career development primer course. The primer course effectively allowed all key stakeholders to begin the development of the framework by speaking and understanding the same language. This promoted enhanced communication as the framework was being developed and enabled those around the table to tailor the document to their needs and reality. Equally important in the framework's development was infusing culture into it or perhaps more accurately, it into Inuit culture. To do this, the group brought in another framework, the Inuit Societal Values (ISV), to ensure that the career development frame-

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¹ The provinces of Alberta (developed in 2003 and called Skills Investment Strategy) and Manitoba (developed in 2009 and called Your Future, Your Way) also have frameworks. All three models NWT, Alberta and Manitoba were reviewed in the development of Nunavut's Framework for Career Development Service Delivery.

work was guided by these Inuit principles. Four values from the ISV were selected by the group to become the guiding principles for service delivery and policy development in the framework:

◆ **Pijitsirniq (Serving and providing for family and/or community)**

- **Services will be lifelong:** no end points or criterion-based gaps in service;
- **Services will be seamless:** all stakeholders will work together to ensure that when clients move from one life stage to another, services will be made available as required;
- **Services will be made available to Nunavummiut in their home communities;**
- **Services and policies will target resources, programs and activities to support citizens in all Employability Dimensions with particular focus on work readiness.²**

◆ **Tunnganarniq (Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive)**

- **Services and policies will be client-focused** (i.e. widely available, widely known, welcoming and will recognize all experience);
- **Services and policies will be responsive to the changing needs of the client.**

◆ **Pilimaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq (Development of skills through practice, effort and action)**

- **Services will foster career self-reliance and resourcefulness;**
- **Policies, programs and services will recognize that the Nunavut labour market is a land-based, culture-based and wage-based economy.**

◆ **Piliriqatigiinniik/Ikajuqtigiinniik (Working together for a common cause)**

- **Policies and services will build and promote a career development culture:** All Nunavummiut will engage with not only their own career development, but also the career development of fellow community members;

- **Policies and services will seek a balanced approach between individual, community and labour market needs.**

The group also insisted on a lifelong approach; a continuum that truly reaches from cradle to grave. In the framework's initial service directions, the GN has outlined a number of initial actions for children from birth to 5 years old (e.g. provide Early Childhood Educators with training to ensure pre-school children are school-ready), students in kindergarten to grade 12 (e.g. develop Aulajaaqtut – career and life – curriculum from K-12), adult learners and post-secondary students (e.g. establish Career-Learning Centres on all campuses), adults (e.g. develop a transition to work strategy), GN employees (e.g. produce labour market information for careers in the public service), employers and other partners (e.g. partner with all stakeholders to support effective school-to-work transitions) and communities (e.g. develop and implement a Community Career Action Plan). The framework truly speaks to a holistic approach to service delivery with the goal of creating a career development culture in all communities throughout Nunavut.

Evaluation of the framework is at its core as all initial actions have articulated outcomes prior to implementation and the framework as a whole will be evaluated at 3-5 year intervals. The framework is also aligned to the GN's priority document, Tamapta 2009-2013, to ensure that the framework directly contributes to those directives set out by the government, such as improving education and training outcomes, reducing poverty, addressing social concerns, and supporting community-based sustainable economies.

The framework is currently at a partial implementation phase with full implementation envisioned for 2012.

At the beginning of its development, participants were challenged to think of a visual image to capture the "essence" of the career development framework they were about to build. They saw that the framework should work like a seal skin frame – a process that has the capacity to transform raw material, shift as that material evolves and grows, and produce tangible, valuable results which sustain Nunavummiut's way of life. The seal skin frame is fundamental to the survival of the Inuit, as is having the

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² Employability is having the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to successfully get a job, keep a job and grow in your career. The Employability Dimensions are the major themes that can concern or challenge people as they seek to come to terms with how best to incorporate work into their lives. These dimensions are:

- Job/Work Readiness: basic readiness to look for work, get a job or keep a job.
- Career Exploration: knowing what type of work suits you.
- Skills Enhancement: having the skills you need for the work you want.
- Work/Job Search: having the skills you need to successfully find work.
- Work/Job Maintenance: having the skills to keep work once you found it.
- Career Growth: being able to manage career changes. ("Career Development: Employability Dimensions", Amundson, 2003).

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC POLICY: Canada Action Plan



Hungary 2011 6th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy

The 6th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (IS2011) was held in Budapest, Hungary from December 5-7, 2011. The invitational event was attended by 127 delegates representing 32 countries spanning all continents. Country teams were encouraged to include policy, practice and research perspectives. The Canada Team was comprised of three delegates as follows:

- ◆ **Sareena Hopkins, Chair** (Canadian Council of Career Development Associations - CCCDA and Canadian Career Development Foundation - CCDF)
- ◆ **Dr. Bryan Hiebert** (Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development - CRWG)
- ◆ **Tannis Goddard** (Training Innovations)

In addition, there was senior representation from key international/regional bodies, such as the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP), International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) and European Commission.

IS2011 aimed to build closer dialogues and linkages between career development policy makers in the fields of education, employment, economic development and social inclusion, and with strategic professional leaders and researchers. The four sub-themes for IS2011 were:

1. Political, economic and social changes and the changing role of career development and career development policies.
2. Lifelong career development policy as a part of integrated human resource development policies - challenges and opportunities.
3. The changing world and the changing role of career development - skills and competencies for lifelong career development practitioners.
4. Evidence-based practice; evidence-based policies.

Prior to the event, each country was commissioned to prepare a country paper, delineating the current realities, key strengths, challenges and priorities related to these four themes. At the Symposium, delegates formed into small working groups for deliberations focused on each theme. Groups were varied, enabling delegates to work in groups representing a mix of policy, research and practice and cross-nationally. Throughout the Symposium, the Canada country team met regularly to pull relevant threads from deliberations on each theme and to begin to craft our country action plan.

A formal communiqué was developed by Tony Watts, who acted as rapporteur throughout the Symposium. The communiqué summarizes key outcomes of the Symposium and, for each theme, identifies important emergent principles and proposes priorities for countries and for the ICCDPP. This, along with all Country Papers, Theme Papers and the IS2011 Reflection Note, can be found at: <http://eletpalya.munka.hu/web/eletpalya-folyoirat/iccdpp13>

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capacity to develop one's career in ways that are responsive to the labour market while reflective of one's culture and values. Participants likened the sides of the frame that support the skin to the various departments of the GN which support career services and the career development culture that is fundamental to the framework. The stretching strings that stretch the skin are like the programs and services delivered to support the development of clients. The focal point of the process is the skin, just as the focal point of the career development framework is the client. Participants also talked about the need for the career development framework to be multidimensional and flexible like a seal skin being stretched in the frame. One member said that "Seal skin changes as you work with it; it is not static and neither are the clients the framework intends to serve." The Nunavut Framework for Career Development Service Delivery serves as an important model for career development frameworks the world over. Not bad for a territory that covers 2.1 million square kilometers with 33,000 citizens living in 25 communities!

CANADA ACTION PLAN

Virtually every country around the world struggles with the “public image” of career development - we all stumble over our language and have difficulty speaking about what we do in terms that excites, compels and impresses the public (and, by extension, employers, policy makers and funders).

Accordingly, the Canada Action Plan focuses significantly on the preparation and dissemination of briefing notes and press releases. Canada is recognized as a leader internationally. We have made significant progress with respect to building our field’s evidence-base. A number of action steps focus on extending this work.

1. General Communication Strategy (December 2011)

- a. Send IS 2011 Communiqué, Reflection Note and Canada Team Report/Action Plan to career development practitioners across Canada (via CCCDA)
- b. Send summary report to members of the inter-jurisdictional Career Development Working Group (relevant provincial government departments) and HRSDC

2. Canada Report Card (early 2012)

- a. Develop a “Report Card” for Canada based on the 4 IS2011 Themes
- b. Disseminate the Canada Report Card via a press release to promote public awareness re: the value of career services, Canadian strengths and current gaps in policy/practice.
- c. Disseminate the Canada Report Card to provincial Ministers of Education and Labour, including key recommendations

3. Evidence-Based Practice (2012-2013)

- a. Collect impact evidence from all participating countries and collate into an international report
- b. Send this report with a targeted briefing note to HRSDC’s Policy Research Branch, requesting an opportunity to meet and discuss recommendations for Canada
- c. Collaborate with the ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) in the development of an Evidence-Based Policy Handbook for use in Canada and internationally

4. International Collaboration (2012-2013)

- a. Find a mechanism for Canada to join the ELGPN - either informally or formally - so that we might

benefit from and contribute to this important policy group

We welcome your input on this Action Plan. Please send your ideas and comments to s.hopkins@ccdf.ca.

CONCLUSION

The 6th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy resulted in rich exchange, dialogue, the establishment of collaborative networks across countries and a commitment to action by country teams. The 7th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy will be hosted by Finland in 2013. It is expected that country teams will, in the interim, articulate and enact action plans based on priorities set in Hungary and be ready to report back on progress made to the international community in two years hence.

SHAPING NEW STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA:

You can be part of it!



NATIONAL Youth Employment DIALOGUES

The *National Youth Employment Dialogues* is a community of practice for youth employment counselling organizations and professionals across Canada.

Using focus groups, a national stream of

workshops at the Futures Youth Employment Conference, and a LinkedIn group, the dialogues have created spaces for open and non-partisan discussion, where all can contribute and learn regardless of status or affiliation. Members share their knowledge of how youth are affected by the challenging economy and insights how to best address today’s youth career development challenges.

You can [join the dialogues](#), log in with your Linked In account. If you are not yet a LinkedIn member, [join](#) now.

The National Youth Employment Dialogues Community of Practice is a project of [First Work](#), funded by the Counselling Foundation of Canada.