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Membership of NICEC is also open to any individual with an interest in career development (£100 per annum). Members receive the journal, free attendance at all NICEC events and access to publications and seminar materials via the NICEC website. Individuals from one organization can share their membership place at events.

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### PUBLISHER

The *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* is published in partnership with the CDI by: National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC), 1 Croft Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1BS.

[www.nicec.org](http://www.nicec.org)

### EDITORIAL

- 2 The new partnership with the CDI and the International Perspectives edition  
**Phil McCash**

### ARTICLES

- 4 Cross-national reviews of career guidance systems: Overview and reflections  
**A. G. Watts**
- 15 The flip side: Career guidance policies and social controls  
**Peter Plant and Helene Valgreen**
- 19 Establishing Croatia's lifelong career guidance service  
**Nicki Moore, Mirjana Zečirević and Simon Peters**
- 27 'Girls into STEM and Komm mach MINT': English and German approaches to support girls' STEM career-related learning  
**Jo Hutchinson**
- 35 'The whole world is my home': An investigation into how a globalised lifestyle, international capital and an international schooling experience influence the identities and aspirations of young people  
**Jonathan Young**
- 43 Supporting international students with careers provision: A review of UK higher education careers service provision and a case study based on the University of Exeter  
**Rachel Coombes**
- 49 Surprised by success: An interim evaluation of an international career development programme  
**Kathleen Houston**
- 57 The global graduate: Developing the global careers service  
**Siobhan Neary, Nalayini Thambar and Sharon Bell**

### NEWS

- 64 Forthcoming public NICEC events

# The new partnership with CDI and the International Perspectives edition

This edition marks a significant turning point in the history of our Journal as NICEC and the Career Development Institute (CDI) have entered into an agreement relating to its future production and distribution. I would therefore like to start this editorial by welcoming readers old and new and explaining this development in a little more detail. I will then move on to introducing the current edition focused on the theme of international perspectives.

## Partnership with the CDI

NICEC is delighted to welcome this exciting and innovative partnership. The Fellows believe that, since the scope of the NICEC Journal is now coterminous with the CDI footprint, it makes sense to develop a strong alliance. The partnership represents an impressive commitment by the CDI to supporting contemporary research and scholarship in our field. Both organisations have long traditions in this area and have pledged to maintain and uphold quality, standards and editorial independence.

The partnership will enable each CDI member to receive a copy of the Journal. As part of this process, we welcome Alison Dixon to the Editorial Board. Alison also edits *Career Matters*, CDI's magazine for the career development sector, and will bring a highly valuable perspective to the Board. There have also been changes to the Journal's front and inside covers as these now incorporate the CDI logo, new straplines and information about CDI. Further joint research events for NICEC and CDI members are also planned.

To help new readers in orientation, the NICEC Journal is distinctive as a scholarly journal devoted wholly to career development work. Each edition contains around eight articles of approximately 3,500 words in length. This enables topics to be explored in reasonable depth whilst maintaining readability and

relevance. Manuscripts are subject to a process of peer review prior to acceptance.

Each edition of the Journal tends to have a theme but, within that, space can be made for submissions on any topic relevant to the aims and scope. In the recent past, we have welcomed articles on a variety of subjects including: career coaching; digital technology in careers work; community, place and locality; boundary crossing; and the professional identity of careers workers. We generally seek to cover a number of specialisms and sectors relevant to our work. For example, in this edition there are articles on careers work in other countries, schools, higher education and the statutory sector. The next edition will mark Tony Watts' imminent retirement by celebrating and reflecting on his seminal contribution to our profession. Further themes will be developed as time goes by and, as always, we are open to suggestions from the readership. Linked to this, an important aim of the NICEC Journal is to provide a space for new writing. I would like to encourage all members of CDI and NICEC to consider this.

## International perspectives

CDI and NICEC members have long been interested in developments overseas both in terms of influencing provision elsewhere and learning from it. I am therefore delighted to introduce eight articles covering a variety of international topics. In contrasting ways, each paper demonstrates the scope and variety of career development work across the globe and a number of innovative suggestions are proposed for the enhancement of delivery.

**Tony Watts** presents the main findings from major cross-national reviews of career guidance systems and policies. He discusses nine key lessons learnt from this process. For example, the importance of combining all-age career guidance services, as found in New Zealand, Scotland and Wales, alongside embedded careers

support in schools, workplaces and elsewhere.

**Peter Plant** and **Helene Valgreen** analyse the policy focus on careers work in Europe and suggest that it has been harnessed to other policy areas such as employment, gender equality and economic development. They argue that this can lead to careers work as an instrument of social control as opposed to an instrument for emancipation and empowerment.

**Nicki Moore, Mirjana Zečirević and Simon Peters** report on the development of lifelong career guidance provision in Croatia. They chart the movement towards three levels of services: self-help services, brief assisted services and individual case-managed services; and discusses the importance of marketing, local partnerships and comprehensive online resources.

**Jo Hutchinson** compares English and German approaches to career-related learning in relation to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). A number of innovative examples are selected and analysed with a particular focus on two large-scale German initiatives: Go-MINT and Girls' Day.

**Jonathan Young** explores the perceptions of young people at an international school in Belgium using photo-elicitation methods and semi-structured interviews. From this, he develops a range of recommendations including the development of internationally-minded interpersonal qualities and skills.

We then move to the higher education sector and three contrasting international case studies: an institutional case study; a career education case study and a management case study. Each paper contains ideas that could potentially be transferred within higher education and indeed more widely within the career development sector.

**Rachel Coombes** explores support for international students within UK higher education. She uncovers several relatively low-cost areas of creative practice including the development of country profiles and inter-university links using Skype.

**Kathleen Houston** reports on the development of an international career education programme. This consists of 14 workshops covering a range of topics including business culture and work experience.

Initial findings, she suggests, indicate students are successfully learning key concepts in relation to global employability.

**Siobhan Neary, Nalayini Thambar and Sharon Bell** discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in managing career support services across university campuses based in the UK, China and Malaysia. They propose a cyclical management model consisting of: mapping connections; mapping activity; strengthening exchange; and embedding practice.

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Phil McCash, Editor

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# Establishing Croatia's lifelong career guidance service

Nicki Moore, Mirjana Zečirević and Simon Peters

**On** July 1st 2013, Croatia became the 28th member state of the European Union. One requirement for Croatia's accession to the EU was the establishment of comprehensive life-long career guidance (LLCG) provision. In 2011, the Croatian Employment Service, the traditional provider of career guidance services to the unemployed, embarked on a programme to establish eight public facing pilot LLCG centres funded through EU transition funding. This article uses the results of an early evaluation of the new LLCG centres undertaken at the end of the pilot stage to explore the inter-relationship between this EU imperative and the policy and practice developments required to establish LLCG in a post-conflict and post-command economy emerging EU country.

## Policy and socio-economic context

The European Commission has long reflected on the importance of career guidance, stating that guidance services have 'a key role to play in any advanced society, particularly ones undergoing rapid economic and social change' (Watts, 1993). The rationale for the provision of impartial careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) was asserted in a resolution passed by the EU Council of Ministers in 2004 that placed lifelong guidance clearly within the context of lifelong learning. The resolution emphasised that all European citizens should have access to high quality guidance at all stages of their lives:

Guidance throughout life contributes to the achievement of the EU goals of economic

development, labour market efficiency and occupational and geographical mobility by enhancing the efficiency of investment in education and vocational training, lifelong learning and human capital and workforce development.

Council of the European Union (2004:2)

The European Life-long Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was established in 2007 to assist EU countries to respond to these recommendations by developing co-operation on LLCG between member states. Recently the ELGPN has located LLCG within a number of pan-European economic and social issues including flexicurity, youth unemployment and the youth guarantee.

The concept of 'flexicurity' describes the flexibility required by employers to make changes to their workforce whilst recognising the need to maintain a level of security for employees who need to maintain their livelihood. Sultana (2012) notes that there is no 'one size fits all' solution in the way governments respond to provide economic security for their citizens. Responses will depend on a range of factors such as a country's specific history of industrial relations, the nature of its welfare state, the performance of its economy and its place in regional and international labour markets. Borbély-Pecze (2012) notes that LLCG can contribute as it acts as a bridge which balances the personal happiness of individuals with the economic and social needs of governments. The EU policy position is that whilst careers guidance will centre upon individual goals, it is also expected to contribute to public policy objectives: making education systems more efficient; contributing to the improved efficiency of the labour market; and helping to improve social equity.

Youth unemployment has become a global problem and can have long term negative effects on a person's life time prospects, earnings, health and social exclusion. At the time of writing, the economic recovery is in its early stages across the EU and it may not be possible for states to increase the number of jobs for young people. However, improving the work-readiness of young people is a policy objective of many EU countries. This requires a new set of career management skills in a changing labour market. A growing policy issue therefore is how best to develop LLCG which embeds career management skills (Hughes & Borbély-Pecze, 2012).

In response to the crisis in youth unemployment and economic inactivity, EU political leaders have agreed a new political initiative, The Youth Guarantee (Borbély-Pecze & Hutchinson, 2013). Borbély-Pecze and Hutchinson argue that effective implementation of The Youth Guarantee can only be achieved by integrating the initiative into national programmes of life-long guidance. They argue that without integration, Youth Guarantee initiatives may simply result in temporary and short term activities which 'get young people off the streets'. Where Youth Guarantee initiatives are integrated they can become a 'springboard to a better future'. (Borbély-Pecze & Hutchinson, 2013: 18)

## Policy lending and borrowing

The notion that policy initiatives travel both across national borders and between sectors is well researched. However Sultana (2009) notes that the success of policy lending and borrowing is a complex one and that there are a 'plethora of economic, ideological and cultural reasons why policies travel... and why sometimes they do not.' The development of Lifelong Career Guidance (LLCG) in Croatia is an interesting example which illustrates policy borrowing on two levels. In the first instance, Croatia is subject to the policy exerted by the EU through its EU membership requirements. The project to develop LLCG also provides an example of policy (and practice) borrowing on a smaller scale. The Croatian Employment Service (CES) was commissioned to implement a pilot of eight career centres using practitioners from other EU countries to develop and implement the provision. In adopting this approach,

they can be deemed to have borrowed external policies and practices.

## The pre-existing LLCG system in Croatia

Career guidance was established in Croatia as early as 1931 through the work of psychologist, Ramiro Bujas, and was delivered through CES. The service was delivered largely to unemployed or disabled Croatian citizens, although career counselling was offered as a universal service to a wider audience through four specific interventions; vocational information; vocational counselling; support to educational institutions through the provision of vocational information; and support to employers through a vacancy matching service. Whilst the CES was the largest and most significant provider of career support in Croatia, it was not the only provider. Other sources included learning providers and colleges, employers, private sector recruitment agencies, community and voluntary sector organisations and some public service organisations.

Borbély-Pecze (2012:10) argued that 'the public opinion of the CES and the county offices strongly links the service and the brand with unemployment registration and the unemployment benefit system'. Services were also being provided to school pupils to help with decisions concerning their future education, and particularly to pupils with disabilities. In reality few people outside the main target group of unemployed people or people with disabilities accessed career guidance services. During the pilot of the eight career centres referred to above, a number of explanations were suggested for this:

- Citizens were unused to taking responsibility for their careers and unwilling to make changes;
- Choice was constrained by a lack of opportunity. Guidance was therefore perceived as unnecessary;
- Citizens were unused to seeking help for career development issues.

The resources for career counselling were overstretched and largely office based. The established model of career guidance used a variety of approaches based on client need. An online information portal (Moj Izbor) provided a universal information service for all, irrelevant of age or stage of education, some clients received support through workshops whilst others (10% of unemployed people with disabilities and 5% of pupils with disabilities) received individual counselling to support them with career decision making. It was noticeable however that there was little connection at a policy level between employment services and other government departments, although on a practice level, partnerships between employment and education sector organisations as well as between some public and private providers did exist. Finally, no national structure or forum existed to draw career guidance managers and practitioners together to debate the development of policy or practice.

Although limited in its scope, the existence of a public career guidance sector, however configured, was a triumph for a country with a turbulent recent history which included financial austerity, conflict and the emergence from a command economy. Croatia demonstrated a commitment to deliver public career guidance services and had a strong platform on which to build.

## Establishing the new Croatian LLCG

LLCG Centres are central places for the expansion of professional career guidance services to the wider community and to a larger number of end users.

Croatian Employment Services (2012:20)

The core for the new strategy for LLCG in Croatia is based on the idea that all citizens need to develop the skills and confidence to make the most of their life choices and opportunities and to follow the career path that is most appropriate for them. LLCG in Croatia therefore supports citizens to:

- Develop the skills to become effective career decision makers and managers;

- Have a clear understanding of the impact of career (i.e. education, training and employment) choices and to make well-informed and realistic career decisions;
- Be lifelong learners, motivated to pursue their professional development in order to achieve their potential;
- Have access to high quality careers education, labour market information and impartial career guidance;
- Develop information handling skills and be aware of career opportunities and
- Be able to use technology to assist their career decision-making, planning and management.

Developing the new approach to LLCG required many changes at policy and practice level. The first step in developing the new service was the development of a national strategy for LLCG (Croatian Employment Services 2012 n.p.). The new strategy reinforced the idea that successful LLCG reflected the policy priorities of a number of government ministries including improving the skills base of the country, promoting employment and improving social inclusion and social mobility. An essential element of the strategy was the recognition of fundamental principles of joint ownership, developing best practice and long term government commitment. The strategy was based on inputs from stakeholders with a range of public, private and third sector backgrounds drawn together to form the 'National Forum Working Group' later to become the National Forum for LLCG.

The strategy positions the service as a 'new' way of providing career guidance in Croatia. The service includes new publicly accessible centres for the delivery of LLCG (CISOKs) and the development of an IT based resource for gathering and disseminating management information, support materials and public facing information including LMI and vacancy information. Provision in the pilot centres is more client led, comprehensive, differentiated, targeted and localised. The LLCG service has a unique brand and is promoted as different from the traditional CES service. The model of delivery which has been adopted by CES is based on work by Professor J. Sampson (2008) and adapted for the Croatian context. The model offers

three levels of service delivery; self-help; brief assisted services and individual case managed services.

The new differentiated service will allow us to meet the needs of the maximum number of clients. This ensures our resources are being used effectively. The new service will be based on the accurate assessment of needs of the service users. (Zecirević cited in Moore, 2013 n.p:18)

## Reflection on the success of policy lending and borrowing in the implementation of Croatian LLCG

### Policy borrowing at a national level

The development of LLCG is an EU imperative with finance made available for this through transition funding. Although at one level the EU can be seen as policy lending by determining the provision of LLCG amongst its member states, it is also using this imperative as an instrument to achieve its own wider policy goals. Whilst many would argue for the importance of LLCG in developing national aspiration and labour market efficiencies, it could be argued that there is a tension between the wider needs of the EU and the policy requirements of transitioning EU nations. These differences could be derived from variations in the specific cultural, political or economic contexts of individual nations which could be in conflict with wider EU requirements. The extent to which this EU policy directive will ultimately lead to the achievement of its goals is yet to be established. In the case of Croatia, transition funding has been used by the Croatian government to achieve a new focus on the delivery of LLCG building on an established foundation of vocational guidance.

The early evaluation of the new Croatian LLCG system (Moore, 2013) indicates that the government has established a long term vision and coherent strategy for career development and employability spanning a number of government departments, the

public, private and voluntary sectors. This suggests that the Croatian Government and CES have enthusiastically embraced the role of 'policy borrower' at a national level.

New national marketing strategies are promoting strong messages about the benefits of engaging in career development for all Croatian citizens. This is encouraging aspiration amongst young people, resulting in a demand for education and jobs. However, unless there is a corresponding increase in opportunities, the intended improved efficiencies in the labour market are unlikely to result. This aim will only be realised if national approaches are established which engage employers and support entrepreneurship and business development across the country. Although the LLCG is tasked with supporting these important functions through its work with employers, the current lack of expertise and limited resources will need to be addressed if improved economic development is to be fully realised. CES is addressing this through the implementation of a further project in 2014 to introduce active labour market policies and practices.

As previously noted, ELGPN has established a number of policy and socio-economic drivers for LLCG. The following table describes the responses made by the new Croatian LLCG service in terms of each of these drivers in policy and practice terms.

The table below demonstrates that the Croatian LLCG service is responding to the ELGPN policy drivers in a number of ways. However it is early in the development of the new service and, at the point of evaluation, staff in the new centres had not had time to develop their practices fully and were seeking confirmation that their ideas for new approaches were acceptable. The evaluation of the CISOKs revealed that

Staff have a great many ideas for activities and partnerships; however they are also seeking confirmation that their ideas are valid and appropriate. Moore (2013 n.p:24)

Further investigation might reveal that the new service has developed more sophisticated ways of responding to these policy drivers.

**Table 1: The LLCG responses to ELGPN policy and socio-economic drivers**

Policy and socio-economic driver	Response
Flexibility	<p><b>Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The inclusion of employer bodies and government ministries in the development of the new LLCG strategy.</li> <li>The recognition in policy terms that a move from matching individuals to jobs to the development of employability was critical to national success.</li> <li>The introduction of a 'needs based model for LLCG delivery' as opposed to the existing resource-based system.</li> </ul> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The positioning of LLCG shop front centres in easily accessible positions.</li> <li>Flexible opening times to appeal to those otherwise active during normal shop opening times.</li> <li>LLCG centres offer a one-stop-shop approach for all information and guidance services for education and employment</li> <li>The provision of reliable and co-ordinated labour market information to enable Croatian citizens to make well informed career choices.</li> <li>LLCG centres equipped with workshop areas and a menu of career development workshops including career management skills and employability.</li> <li>The training of a new cohort of careers advisers in a range of techniques to engage and support life long career development.</li> <li>Advisers perceived as more than users of LMI but rather as generators of LMI.</li> </ul>
Youth unemployment	<p><b>Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LLCG centres tasked with outreach activities to engage unemployed young people.</li> <li>A new drive to target young people and their parents in career development activities and thinking through strong national marketing campaigns</li> </ul> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some CISOKs have been positioned in areas frequented by youth such as adjacent to youth centres.</li> <li>Centres designed to be modern and appealing to young people</li> <li>Advisers tasked with facilitating links between schools and employers.</li> <li>The provision of a local lead vacancy matching service</li> </ul>
Youth guarantee	<p><b>Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership activity embedded in the national strategy as an underlying principle for success.</li> <li>Local partnerships focusing on the career guidance and support needs of communities.</li> <li>Targeting of disadvantaged groups</li> <li>Differentiated model for the delivery of LLCG ensuring resources are used for those with most need.</li> </ul> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal agreements between LLCG centres and partners</li> <li>A menu of workshops and group sessions aimed at supporting transition to work.</li> <li>Emerging local plans to tackle socio-economic issues</li> <li>Co-location of services</li> </ul>

## Policy borrowing at a local level

Policy borrowing at a local level can also bring tensions through the need to make changes to established processes which can have an impact on professional identities and practice. This has been the case in Croatia.

The national strategy for LLCG recognises a need to focus on employability and career development as a response to flexicurity. This requires a shift towards approaches which recognise individual life-course development and contextually influenced career decision making, and away from traditional matching processes. The new differentiated model of delivery has found resonance amongst the delivery staff. The evaluation of the new LLCG noted that

All staff can describe this new model for the delivery and can articulate a rationale for this new approach. All staff have a commitment to engendering a cultural change amongst their clients which will empower and enable them to take control of their own career development requirements. Moore (2013 n.p:6)

Watts (1993) asserts that guidance services are important for individuals who are enabled by guidance processes to derive maximum benefit from the complex choices which face them. The existing CES service was delivered by skilled members of staff, however for the full impact of the new service to be achieved, a new vision for the professional identity of career counsellor needed to be realised. The new LLCG workforce was derived from established vocational guidance practitioners and newly recruited external staff from different vocational backgrounds. The vision for new careers practitioners was very different from the existing roles. The new roles

were not for people who are very rigid. Not for those who expect to be given continual direction by the boss. (Zecirevic cited in Moore, 2013 n.p:23)

The cross-country review of guidance (McCarthy, 2001) for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) noted that training has a dominant effect in establishing a professional identity. Intensive training for the established psychologists

was delivered by UK specialists. This provided insight into new theories and approaches and focused on client engagement and empowerment. As new staff were appointed they received mentoring support from the established, newly trained advisers to develop their own practice. Job descriptions were developed to support the new staff in their roles. The early evaluation noted the professional journeys of both established and new staff who were themselves finding new empowerment and engagement in their practice. Reflective practice has also been established as an integral and valued element of professional practice, and the evaluation noted the important role this played in developing and disseminating new approaches.

In addition to the training, the LLCG development processes have engaged staff in determining localised approaches to the delivery of services. The results of the early evaluation note that this has been an effective approach to engaging staff in the new service.

The majority of staff have been involved in the business planning activities for their CISOKs. This process has been valued as one which respects experience and empowers CISOK staff. Staff have a real sense of ownership and commitment to the new service in part because of their own personal investment in planning the new service.

(Moore, 2013 n.p:6)

One of the foundations of the new LLCG system in Croatia is that success requires local solutions. On a local level, the LLCG strategy draws together all providers of career guidance and support into local partnerships focussed around the new LLCG centres. The democratisation of career services established through the new strategy will enable local and national investment in previously unseen ways in education, training and jobs. Local partnerships, whilst still in their infancy, have delivered unexpected returns. In one area, the local government has formed a formal partnership agreement with the CISOK which reinforces the significance of the new LLCG in the achievement of local targets and promises resources and support to achieve mutual goals. In another area, a local school has provided additional equipment to the CISOK and has entered into conversations with staff on how to work more closely together to support the transitions

of vulnerable learners. In both instances, the LLCG has been described as a community asset and valued as an investment in the local area.

Finally, the development of the comprehensive online resource will have a number of benefits on a local level. The new system requires a higher level of engagement between CISOK career counsellors and local employers giving local staff more responsibility and focus in their outward facing activities. The provision of a locally managed online vacancy matching service will play dividends in easing the local labour market. The system will also provide an excellent source of monitoring data which will contribute to evidenced based local decisions surrounding the development of the new provision.

## Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the inter-relationship between this EU imperative and the policy and practice developments required to establish LLCG in a transitioning EU country. The Croatian Government have seized the opportunity provided by EU transition funding to establish a radical new approach to LLCG as a means of achieving the wider policy goals of flexicurity, youth unemployment and The Youth Guarantee. As such the notion of policy lending can be seen to have been highly effective in driving forward policy and practice at a national level. Although it is still too early to comment on the impact of this initiative on Croatian citizens' career planning and development, the early evaluation of the LLCG service suggests that the de-centralisation and democratisation of career guidance in Croatia has had wider impacts on regional development by drawing stakeholders together to focus on the employment and career guidance needs in localities. The evaluation also suggests that professional practice is developing new and creative approaches. This would suggest that policy borrowing on a local practice level has had a positive impact on the delivery of LLCG. Future evaluations will be able to draw on a wide range of data including up to date management information and the reflections of a wide range of stakeholders and policy makers in order to reflect on the success of the new LLCG service and the extent to which policy borrowing has been helpful in achieving the wider

national policy goals.

The LLCG initiative has been seen by many as a way of encouraging Croatian citizens to take responsibility for their own career development. Encouraging Croatian citizens to improve their aspirations and take responsibility for their career development and lifelong learning will advantage many elements of society, improving social mobility and social equity.



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