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### **Interview**

*In 1992 the NICEC published the Briefing note “Economic Benefits of Careers Guidance”, which was based on J. Killeen’s, M. White’s and A. G. Watts’ monograph *The Economic Value of Careers Guidance*.<sup>1</sup> In July 2015 you and Vanessa Dodd have come with research paper *The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance* published by Careers England.<sup>2</sup> At the first glance one would say that the only difference between these two papers is in wording (‘careers’ vs. ‘career’) and the date of publishing. But we know how much has changed since 1992 in the field of education, learning, labour market, etc., and corresponding career guidance services. Is the importance of these services in the current context the same as it was in early nineties or is the situation much different?*

I think that quite a lot has changed since 1992. Firstly the economic environment has changed. We are still in the position of recovering from the economic crisis and so any discussion of ‘economic benefits’ has to take account of these changed circumstances. We are also seeing other big changes around global and European mobility, the role of new technologies and an increased focus on environmental issues. There have also been major political changes as well. In 1992 the cold war was only just coming to an end and people like Francis Fukuyama were saying that we were ‘at the end of history’.<sup>3</sup> Twenty years later it feels like that was a little premature, politics has not become static and unchanging, but we have seen a new neoliberal consensus and it is within this context that career guidance has operated for the last twenty years. I’m hopeful that this might be starting to shift, but the political economy that we operate in is very different to that which was addressed by John Killeen and his colleagues in the early 1990s.

There are also other reasons for us to revisit some of these debates. The paradigms through which career guidance is delivered have broadened since the 1990s. We are now talking about something which is much more clearly based around a learning paradigm, around experiential pedagogies and around the development of individuals’ career management skills. Guidance has also embraced the use of new technologies and this has in turn reframed the field in different ways.<sup>4</sup> Finally I think that it is also worth noting that the evidence base in the field has developed considerably and that we

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<sup>1</sup> Killeen, J., White, M. and Watts, A. G. (1992). *The Economic Value of Careers Guidance*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Hooley, T. and Dodd, V. (2015). *The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance*. Careers England.

<sup>3</sup> Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. London: Penguin.

<sup>4</sup> See Hooley, T., Shepherd, C. and Dodd, V. (2015). *Get Yourself Connected: Conceptualising the Role of Digital Technologies in Norwegian Career Guidance*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby for further discussion of this.

now know much more about the impacts of career guidance.<sup>5</sup> This knowledge allows us to talk about the potential economic impacts with much more confidence.

*The research paper deals quite substantially with the situation in the United Kingdom, and especially in England. Do you think that findings and arguments supporting the development of better career guidance services in England are let's say more general and transferable to other environments, other countries?*

Well, we were commissioned to write a piece on the economic impacts of guidance by *Careers England* which is an organisation of careers companies in England. Because of this we were keen to explore these issues in relation to the economic objectives of the British government. The purpose of the paper was really to make an argument to government that guidance is worth investing in and that it could help the government to meet some of its own economic objectives.

But, although the paper was fairly country specific I think that a lot of the basic thinking that we have done can be applied much more widely. Our argument is that career guidance acts on individuals' human capital and social capital and that it supports them to make effective transitions. From this we can then follow through to identify impacts on the education and employment system, but also a range of secondary impacts on things like people's health, their likelihood of committing crimes and a wide range of other social benefits. From there we've then highlighted macro benefits that are particularly relevant the England and the UK, but it would be possible to do something very similar for other countries.

The evidence base that we have drawn on for this paper is international and I think that we can be reasonably certain that guidance has the potential to make an economic contribution wherever it exists.

*In your inaugural professorial lecture "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery: self-actualisation, social justice and the politics of career guidance"<sup>6</sup> (held on September 17, and published in October 2015) you mentioned that our careers should be characterised by autonomy, optimism and fulfilment and also that more people should have the opportunity to self-actualise and have a better career whilst recognising that in order to achieve this we are going to need to change the way in which we organise society. How can career guidance support this?*

In that lecture I tried to make the argument that career guidance was essential about providing people with the opportunity to self-actualise. When we encourage people to learn about themselves and the world around them and to use this learning to inform their career development we are encouraging people to think about who they are, what they want to contribute and how they can be happy and maximise their wellbeing. Of course career guidance has economic benefits as well as we've already discussed, but I would ultimately like to see wellbeing and the realisation of human potential being articulated as the goals of public policy rather than just a growth in GDP.

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<sup>5</sup> Hooley, T. (2014). *The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance*. Jyväskylä, Finland: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).

<sup>6</sup> Hooley, T. (2015). *Emancipate Yourself from Mental Slavery: Self-Actualisation, Social Justice and the Politics of Career Guidance*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby (available [here](#)).

The problem is that when you start to think about career guidance in these terms it starts to very quickly become clear that everyone does not have the same opportunity to access the 'good life'. Depending on the country you are born in, your race, class and gender, you are likely to experience different barriers in achieving your potential. A lot of what career guidance does is to help people to overcome these barriers.

What I've been starting to think and talk about is the idea that career guidance might have a role in starting to actually challenge those barriers. Many of the barriers that we encounter because of where we are born are highly political and possible, even likely, to change. Over the last hundred years we've seen big shifts in the experience of women, ethnic minorities and working people. But those shifts haven't just been one way and the world isn't just inevitably getting better, fairer and more equal.<sup>7</sup> However, as people like Pickett and Wilkinson have argued, when we increase equality it benefits everyone and allows us to live in better societies.<sup>8</sup>

So the question is can career guidance actually do something other than just help people to cope with an unfair world? Can career guidance actually contribute to bringing about a new and better world? I think that it can. I think that the conversations that we have with people during career guidance, which encourage them to think about their place in the world can provide a space within which we can raise some political issues. I think that we should be comfortable talking to people about their values, about the tensions that they perceive between their career aspirations and an unfair world. I think that we also need to be more comfortable about suggesting collective solutions to the career problems that they perceive alongside more individual solutions. So for example if someone wants to improve their wages we should be talking about collective bargaining through a trade union as well as about personal advancement through promotion or a new job.

Some of this is fairly new for career guidance professionals, but I think that it is an area that we need to all work on together. We need to rework our models of practice to address the current global context and to help us to play a part in bringing about a new and better world.

You are the Head of the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby, you are university teacher, you are also a researcher (not to mention all other hats you currently wear...) – we know that you are currently involved also in the Erasmus+ project with the title L.E.A.D.E.R., the part of which is the International Survey on Career Management Skills. In some countries the development of CMS is naturally included in school curricula, in other countries it is still a challenge to be achieved in the future.

Could you tell us something about your expectations here?

I think that the purpose of career education and guidance is to help individuals to learn about themselves, their careers and the world around them. What career management skills frameworks do is to detail out what this actually means in practice. So the CMS framework that we've been working on in the LEADER project breaks this down into five areas that could form the basis of a career education curriculum in a school or university.<sup>9</sup> So in this project we divided CMS up into

<sup>7</sup> Dorling, D. *Inequality and the 1%*. London: Verso.

<sup>8</sup> Pickett, K. and Wilkinson, R. (2009). *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*. London: Penguin.

<sup>9</sup> Neary, S., Dodd, V. and Hooley, T. (2016). *Understanding Career Management Skills: Findings From the First Phase of the CMS LEADER Project*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

personal effectiveness, managing relationships, finding work and accessing learning, managing life and career and understanding the world. This breaks down a big and abstract idea like 'career management' into usable learning outcomes like '*I can decide on and set my life/career goals within appropriate timescales*' or '*I can act effectively as a part of society as a whole*' (social awareness). From these kind of learning outcomes it is possible for educators to come up with activities that can develop people's capabilities.

So a CMS framework is a practical tool that we can use to translate abstract ideas about career into actual educational interventions. Such interventions can be organised as a programme in their own right or linked to existing curriculum areas. I think that in Slovakia you should use things like the LEADER project to inspire you to create your own CMS framework which you can implement across the education and employment system. It needs to be embedded in Slovak culture and the context of the Slovak economy, labour market and education system. If you can do this a CMS framework can provide you with a valuable tool for transforming career guidance in the country.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and involvement!

Euroguidance centre Slovakia

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Professor Tristram Hooley is the Head of the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby. He has been involved in research, teaching and education in and around higher education for most of his career and has particular interests in careers, doctoral education, social capital and the role of technology in research, teaching and guidance.

Professor Hooley is a member of the UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum and serves on the editorial board of the British Journal of Guidance and Counselling. Recent publications have focused on the subjects of social media, narrative in careers work, entrepreneurship and the role of the market in careers work. He also writes the Adventures in Career Development blog (<http://adventuresincareerdevelopment.posterous.com>) where you can find musings on various aspects of careers work, research and technology.

You can find Tristram and a list of his publications on the iCeGS website (<http://www.derby.ac.uk/icegs/staff-and-associates/icegs-staff/dr-tristram-hooley-head-of-icegs>). You can

also find him on Twitter under the name of @pigironjoe (<http://twitter.com/#!/pigironjoe>) as well as scattered across various other social media sites. Perhaps most interestingly you can find a complete bibliography of everything that he had read or planned to read over the last two years on his CiteULike account (<http://www.citeulike.org/profile/pigironjoe>). He also answers emails at [t.hooley@derby.ac.uk](mailto:t.hooley@derby.ac.uk).