



Workshop

Labour market information (LMI) in Lifelong guidance (LLG)

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Background paper

LMI can decisively inform the career decisions of people, whether they are aspiring youth, experienced professionals, employed, unemployed or older people. LMI can better inform people regarding the tendencies of the labour market, being especially useful if it provides information regarding the jobs available at local level or if it presents reasonable mobility pathways. While LMI holds the potential to support career decisions, it only does so if its quality is assured (e.g. reliability, updatedness, appropriate geographic scale) and it is accessible by a diverse set of users, who must, in turn, have an adequate set of skills to reflect upon the information provided. Other aspects which can limit LMI usability, include limited skills and competences of teachers/trainers, parents and managers of career services and the existence of scattered sources information.

Career guidance and counselling, as well as school based careers education develop a set of activities which not only make LMI available to users, as they develop skills and competences to better access and use it. Careers education is normally developed at school or training environments and aims at allowing individuals to develop a set of career management skills, in which is included autonomy in searching, analysing and making informed career decisions regarding study choices and vocational decisions. Career guidance and counselling consist in a set of activities which can include information, advice, mentoring, training in key skills, client advocacy and structured reflection and refinement of personal career themes and planning. Guidance can and should be combined with curricular career education and, as a general principle, its intensity and depth should be adapted to individual needs.

A growingly popular strategy to overcome accessibility and fragmentation barriers is to create national or regional single online access point to LMI, combined with some type of career guidance offer. The usage of ICT-rich solutions to enable access to both career information and guidance services raises, nevertheless, particular challenges. Firstly it does not provide an immediate solution to skills gaps in LMI interpretation and usage, adding to these potential issues related with digital literacy of users. Secondly it raises the challenge of generating an integrated system that guarantees a steady flow of adequate information and intelligence from its diverse sources to delivery. Thirdly, it also carries the challenge of

sustaining the quality of career development support in a technological evolved environment.

ICT's have been shaping the way we think, act, connect and take decisions. Given the increased access and the diversity of ICT tools used in career guidance, but also the rapid evolvement of such technologies, it is hard to conceive of a future where these tools will not be present, either as standalone (used during different phases of the career guidance process), or integrated in complex, personalized and individualized career guidance sessions.

Developing user-adapted, attractive, and engaging tools which bring the individual closer to the labour market information is a challenging task. Such a task requires cooperation and collaboration between different stakeholders, a special attention on the type and the quality of the information provided for user groups with different levels of digital skills and with different career guidance needs.

Cedefop's forthcoming research publication on "LMI in lifelong guidance" highlights a number of solutions adopted across Member States to improve access to LMI, while integrating it with guidance and career education activities. The study also displays an initial reflection on conditions for adaptation and transferability of initiatives to distinct national environments. As part of this research, a blueprint of two LMI toolkits: "LMI guide for practitioners" and "Bringing LMI to clients" was developed. Both toolkits provide support material for practitioners, presenting LMI relevance for the career guidance, quality criteria, skills and competences, but also suggestions on LMI integration in career guidance of different user-groups. These blueprints have essentially the intention of working as a display of basic concepts and tips, as well as an access point to capacity building resources for career development support.

Workshop objective

This workshop will have around 20 participants, mostly international experts in LMI and career guidance, with published research on the topic, as well as promoters of relevant projects in the EU. Bearing in mind that Cedefop is currently implementing large scale initiative aiming at developing tools to support capacitation of guidance services in LMI and ICT, which can be integrated in the actual national versions of the toolkits, the workshop will:

- Present the results of Cedefop's study on LMI in lifelong guidance
- Reflect upon conditions for the implementation of good practices
- Discuss the key issues and challenges encountered when developing quality ICT and LMI for LLG
- Discuss priorities for the development of LMI and ICT based services in the EU;
- Identify further steps in the development of the LMI toolkits.