Labour market information in lifelong guidance
AO/RPA/PMDFON/LMI in Guidance/007/14

Case study visit focusing on IMT en ligne [Online LMI], Placement en ligne, REPÈRES, in Quebec, Canada
prepared for CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Disclaimer
This text is presented in its original form.
It has neither been revised nor edited by Cedefop.
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1. Background information on the case study

This section present the focus of the case study and the schedule of the field visit to Canada (Quebec province), as well as the presentation of the host institution which is the main public provider of labour market information in the province of Quebec, Canada.

1.1 Field-visit information

The following table summarizes the organizations that have been visited during the field study visit and the name of the person conducting the interviews. Names of participants can be found in Annex I as well as the dates of the visits.

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<th>Country in focus</th>
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<td>Host organization</td>
<td>Emploi Québec, the public employment agency of the Ministry of labour, employment and social solidarity <a href="http://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/">http://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/</a></td>
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| Interviewer | Michel Turcotte – Career guidance counsellor, consultant (turcotte.michel@gmail.com) |

| Dates of field visit | 27, 28 and 30 April 2015 6 and 7 May 2015 |

1.2 Country context in education and employment matters

The responsibility for education and employment matters in Canada has been decentralized. The provinces and territories are responsible for education and employment. The federal government has maintained a role in the production and dissemination of Labour Market Information (LMI), in complementary with the provincial production and dissemination of LMI. In order to facilitate pan-Canadian collaboration, two organizations have been created: Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC-http://www.cmec.ca) and the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM-http://www.flmm-fmmt.ca).
The CMEC is an intergovernmental body founded in 1967 by ministers of education to serve as a forum to discuss policy issues; a mechanism through which to undertake activities, projects, and initiatives in areas of mutual interest; a means by which to consult and cooperate with national education organizations and the federal government; and an instrument to represent the education interests of the provinces and territories internationally. CMEC provides leadership in education at the pan-Canadian and international levels and contributes to the exercise of the exclusive jurisdiction of provinces and territories over education.

The FLMM was founded in 1983. This organization engages intergovernmental collaboration on issues relating to Canadian labour markets, Canadian employers and Canadian workers on key priorities such as: enhancing labour market information, improving mobility of workers and ensuring effective employment services."

1.3 Province of Quebec context

1.3.1 General

(a) population of eight million people
(b) mostly francophone (80% of the population)
(c) active labour market population: 4.5 million people
(d) unemployment rate: 7.5%

1.3.2 Education

The education system comprised:

(a) pre-school;
(b) elementary for six years;
(c) secondary schools for five years, with major guidance decision at grade ten: vocational training versus academic routes;
(d) college: guidance decision - three pathways:
   (i) two years of pre-university program or;
   (ii) three years of technical education programs;
   (iii) directly to employment.
(e) university:
   (i) bachelor degree (three years);
   (ii) master degree (two years);
   (iii) doctoral degree.

The education system is highly permeable and flexible. It allows the citizens to come back to the educational system through the adult education system and encourages them to pursue their studies. The education is free up to the end of the college level, and then the tuition fees vary according to the province. Quebec has the lowest level of tuition fees (around 1000 to 1500 euros per semester), with an excellent financial student loans and grants system.

1.4 Lifelong career guidance services

1.4.1 Organization of the career guidance services

Guidance services are provided throughout the lifespan. In the primary education and lower secondary levels, most of the guidance activities focus on career exploration and career
awareness of the world of work. A “comprehensive guidance school” concept has been implemented in the early 2000’s, at the whole secondary school level, replacing a career education course that was on the curriculum for almost 20 years. The comprehensive guidance school concept considers that all significant persons of students (family, teachers, employers) can contribute to the development of world of work awareness and may facilitate the linkages between educational matters and the workplace. Career counsellors in this context assist teachers to create linkages between their subject matter and the world of work, and will assist students who have more difficulties to make decision about subject matters and eventually deciding on a study course, especially at transition points of grade ninth and grade 11th. For those students who at grade ninth choose the vocational route, a career exploration course is offered in the curriculum and the career counsellor assists the teacher in this matter. They provide as well career counselling. The IMT en ligne and the REPÈRES career and exploration system are used extensively at this level. A description of those systems will be described later on in this report. Career and personal counselling, labour market information, job search counselling is also provided at the college and university levels. The public employment service, through the active employment measures, offers career and employment counselling through third parties, mostly NGOs in career development. The other measures provided by the employment agencies are similar to those provided by most OECD countries that is: job clubs; labour market training such as vocational training and soft skills training; training on the job; job subsidy; starting your own business.

1.4.2 Career guidance counsellors and employment counsellors

The workforce in career guidance comprises two main groups of practitioners: career counsellor, which is a regulated occupation in Quebec for more than 50 years, and employment and career information specialist.

In order to practice and use the title “career guidance counsellor”, you have to register and get your permit with "l'Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec" [College of career counsellors] (http://orientation.qc.ca). More than 2500 people are registered as career guidance counsellors in Quebec. The same permit allows the counsellor to work in different types of work settings. Career counsellors may work in the schools from primary to university levels (around 60 % of them), in the employment and rehabilitation services (20%), and the remaining in private practices, human resources and skills development departments of large corporations and in the mental health sector. To get your permit you need to have completed a bachelor and master degrees in career counselling. Four universities in Quebec offer programs in career counselling at the bachelor and master levels. In the educational curriculum of career guidance counsellors, there is a minimum of three credits course (45 hours) on the production and dissemination of LMI, major LMI systems and websites such as IMT en ligne, REPÈRES, and how to integrate LMI in the career counselling process. In addition, during the practicum of 600 hours, the career guidance counsellor student is supervised on the use of LMI in the counselling process. This is one component of the competency profile leading to the acquisition of the permit to practice career counselling. A copy of the competencies profile for career guidance counsellor can be found on the website of the Ordre des conseillers d'orientation (http://orientation.qc.ca/files/Admission-par-%C3%A9quivalence_Candidats-ayant-%C3%A9tudi%C3%A9-%C3%A0-l%E2%80%99ext%C3%A9rieur-du-Canada_Tableau.pdf).

For the employment and career information specialist, there is no specific skills requirement, although most of them hold a bachelor degree, and a good percentage of them, a bachelor degree in career guidance. They learn on the job, get some on site trainings and work primarily in employment and career development organizations.
1.5 Background on the institution responsible for the production and maintenance of the LMI under study

The organization responsible for the production of IMT en ligne is the Ministry of Employment and Solidary, through its public employment agency, Emploi Québec. The Ministry is responsible to offer employment services, to manage the active employment measures and to produce, maintain and update its major LMI products such as IMT en ligne, Placement en ligne, and regional and local labour market analysis bulletins.
2. Initiative in focus: IMT en ligne (Online LMI); Placement en ligne, REPÈRES

2.1 IMT en ligne

IMT en ligne means labour market information online. IMT en ligne has been in operation for more than 15 years. This is part of the ‘universal’ service provided by the public employment agency in the province of Quebec, Canada. The service is free, and completely online. It aims to assist primarily job seekers and employers. The tool is designed to facilitate the access to valid and trustworthy career and labour market information, which include information on educational programs and on employers. This LMI product is used as well in the school system at all levels (secondary to university), and is embedded in the tools box of guidance services in those educational institutions and any career development services providers in the province of Quebec. The product is in two languages, French and English. The data collected and provided through IMT en ligne, is also used to populate the information components of other career guidance support tools on the Internet, namely the REPÈRES system used in the educational institutions, from secondary to university. See the section on REPÈRES below.

2.1.1 Components

IMT en ligne is comprised of four major components: (a) Explore a trade or an occupation; (b) Find training program; (c) Find out about a sector of activity; (d) Find a business. Let’s present the components in details.

2.1.2 Explore a trade or an occupation

This component provides an opportunity to know and explore in details an occupation. The Canada National Occupational Classification (NOC) (http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/Welcome.aspx) is the main classification source to organize the information about occupations. Most information collected on the labour market (placement, occupations in demand, unemployment and so on) and use for LMI dissemination, is organized according to this classification system. Here the categories of information collected and disseminated through the IMT en ligne:

Information that comes mainly from the NOC and which does not requires regular update:

(a) job titles;
(b) nature of work;
(c) fields of interest;
(d) main duties;
(e) main characteristics of the occupation;
   (i) interests;
   (ii) physical activities;
   (iii) aptitudes;
   (iv) environmental conditions;
   (v) relationship of the occupation with data, person, thing.
(f) employment requirements;
(g) skill type;
(h) skill level;
(i) job titles;
(j) professional associations or other.

Regular updates:

(a) jobs prospects by occupation and by region;
(b) salary and statistics:
   (i) wages;
   (ii) employment by age;
   (iii) employment by sex;
   (iv) full-time versus part-time.
(c) related training programs (which institutions offer educational or training programs);
(d) online placement (link to the "placement en ligne" tool);
(e) main sectors of activity where you find the occupation.

Additional features:
You can sort the occupational database by several types of criteria, such as: NOC code, jobs in demand; regulated occupation, non-traditional occupations, field of interest, skill type, salary, etc. Basically, you can sort on any fields provided in the standardized description.

2.1.3 Find a training program component

In this component, the system links the user to another website developed by the Ministry of Education. The name of the website is 'Inforoute to education'. The user can search by type of programs at the secondary, college or university levels. There is a search component on lifelong learning, which provides continuous education information from public and private institutions.

2.1.4 Find out about a sector of activity component

In this component, the user can search major sector of activities according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The types of information provided are:

(a) description;
(b) business directory;
(c) workforce sectorial committees;
(d) sectorial associations;
(e) job prospects by industry sectors;
(f) wages and statistics;
(g) main occupations.

2.1.5 Find a business component

This component allows the user to identify companies' information sorted by industry sectors. This is useful information when the user is conducting a job search. In addition, on the main website of the employment agency (http://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/), it provides access to other tools to learn more about the labour market and job search:

(a) regional analysis of the labour market, and LMI newsletter. This is also useful for job seekers and employers;
(b) know yourself exercises;
(c) job search guide;
(d) financial assistance;
(e) information about job readiness measures:
   (i) career counselling;
   (ii) information sessions on labour market;
   (iii) assistance with job search;
   (iv) internship and job shadowing;
   (v) assistance to take training.

2.2 Placement en ligne [Online Placement]

Another major component of the LMI system under the Public Employment Agency ‘Emploi Quebec’ is the labour exchange system tool where employers place their job orders and job seekers offer their service through a skills and occupational based database. This is the labour exchange system mostly visited in Quebec. They also link to other labour exchange systems. The user has the possibility to create its own file or portfolio.

2.3 One major related product: REPÈRES

REPÈRES (https://www.reperes.qc.ca/asp/reperes.aspx) is a comprehensive career guidance system that has been on the market since 1980. It was created by the Ministry of Education, which licensed few years later the product to a company to continue the maintenance, research and development and marketing of the product. The Ministry of Education is still active in providing information for educational and training component of the database.

REPÈRES is in every school at all levels (secondary, college and university) in the Quebec province. It also available in most career development centers for youth and adults. There is an annual fee that needs to be paid by organizations that use it. In return, schools provide personal access to every student. They can use the system at home alone or with their parents. Because it is not free, a lot of users cannot access it. If they have the choice between IMT en ligne or REPÈRES, counsellors will use the later with their clients.

The system is considered user friendly and contains a comprehensive database made of the following components:
(a) occupational profiles (most of the information comes from the IMT en ligne described above);
(b) occupational characteristics (interest, aptitude, value, etc.);
(c) where to find educational and training programs associated to occupations;
(d) survey results on graduate placement;
(e) occupational outlooks (information comes from IMT en ligne);
(f) financing your studies;
(g) employers information;
(h) career planning tools and a portfolio space on the server to save your exploration;
(i) possibility to sort and search for occupations by all the descriptors.

Similar products in north America are:
(b) Career cruising: http://public.careercruising.com/en/
2.4 Data Collection and dissemination mechanisms

A team of economists at Emploi Quebec conducts analysis of labour market indicators and produces the information that needs to be updated regularly, namely, wages, occupational outlook, education files, unemployment rates and so on. They can count as well on a network of analysts in all regions of the province, to collect qualitative data on the labour market conditions, namely, new projects coming in, downsizing industries or sectors.

2.5 Support to users and practitioners

The LMI team at Emploi Quebec provides support to clients. When a client is met for the first time when applying for employment services, the front line agent will conduct a needs assessment, where employability skills are examined and where he/she can point to the client some sections on the “IMT en ligne” the client could consult. The employability skills are:

(a) does the client has an occupational goal, if not, the client could be directed to a career counsellor and at the same time, be directed to the career exploration and occupational components of the IMT en ligne;
(b) if the person has an occupational goal but needs to acquire the technical skills, the client can be directed to the educational and training component of the IMT en ligne;
(c) if the client has a goal and the skills and is looking for job, the client will be directed to the online placement, regional and local LMI and the section on ‘Find a business’, as well as to the job search guide.

The second level of support is for the career development practitioners. The team of economists and analysts will provide initial and on going training and/or information session on the use and understanding of LMI, on how to interpret the data. The LMI team has also developed an “aide-mémoire”, a checklist for each employability skills to assist the front line practitioners to understand how is organized the LMI website, but also, to assist them to help the client to navigate in the website according to their needs.

Exemplary handout to assist career development practitioners and client to identify employability needs:

To facilitate the training of practitioners and the needs assessment conducted by front line agents, Emploi Quebec has developed a handout providing a checklist of elements to assess when meeting client for the first time. The handout is organized around the ‘four employability dimensions’ model to re-enter the labor market. This model was developed by the Canadian public employment services in the 90’s, and still being use in most provincial employment agencies, to assess the needs of the clientele in order to re-enter the labor market, and to some extent, to assist in organizing the employment services. Those dimensions are the following:

(a) career decision making;
(b) skills enhancement;
(c) job search skills;
(d) job maintenance skills.

For each dimension, the handout provides a checklist to assess the need of the clients, some tips on identifying the barriers and objectives, some services and active employment measures that could be available for the client, some LMI activities in relation to the dimensions; and a navigation map for using IMT en ligne and Placement en ligne.
2.6 How LMI being used by career and employment counsellors

2.6.1 Counsellors

The interviews conducted for this case study with career and employment counsellors in different settings (secondary and university education; public employment, NGOs in employability development) have been quite instructive in terms of conception of using LMI in interventions. Here some considerations:

(a) career counsellors consider that LMI is useful to assist clients to go deeper in their understanding of the world of work and the specific occupations they are exploring. The use of LMI may trigger a conversation around what the client really expects as a career;
(b) it is important to assist clients to understand how to navigate and understand the terminology used for dissemination of LMI (such as to understand what good, medium opportunity means; how salary information is being collected etc.). In most of the public employment services offices and career and employment development centers, you will find a resource information area where a career development practitioner can assist clients in an advising role, to navigate through the LMI;
(c) the timing to use LMI is important, it is not an issue that everybody would require LMI all the time, but a matter of when in the exploration process, they need it according to the need of the moment. So the needs assessment is key in assisting clients to navigate through LMI;
(d) for groups of clients that are or have been removed from the labour market for a while, for youth with minimal exposure to the labour market and education, their knowledge of the labour market is often very minimal and limited to what they see in their immediate environment. Exposing them to LMI, having them exploring the content of the website, make them realize the scope of the labour market. That being said, the critical condition is to assist clients to navigate through the LMI website according to their needs, and gradually they become self-sufficient in navigating through the website;
(e) LMI is not only the information that has been organized in a meaningful way on a website. In several employment development activities, counsellors invite their clients to go in the workplace to validate the information, have a conversation with job incumbents. They call it, the ‘reality principle’, that is, to make sure that what you understand in reading LMI on the website, is really what you will find once on the job. Employment organizations refer often their clients to a website dedicated to match mentors and students or job seekers who want to know better a given job (http://www. academos.qc.ca);
(f) what does help clients to find the information is the creation of intuitive pathways to reach the information that meets the needs of users. When a LMI website is organized according to needs, such as the pathway to identify an occupation goal; to find the right training for self, to expose the user to job search techniques, these help the user to find the information. Several good LMI websites emulate career and employment counselling process, which help to create pathways to find the information;
(g) the scope of current categories of LMI seems to meet most of the needs for information; the issue then is to find the information and make sense of it according to a well-expressed need for information;
(h) types of information typically searched by clients:

   (i) occupational description;
   (ii) salary;
   (iii) occupational outlook and statistics on occupation;
   (iv) jobs in demand;
   (v) characteristics of an occupation: interests, aptitudes, skills required, physical conditions, in order to compare themselves to job incumbents;
   (vi) educational programs;
(vii) LMI by region; general trends of the labour market;
(viii) videos are very appreciated;
(ix) TV shows on occupations.

(i) do producers of LMI have to develop different LMI products for different types of clientele? Most counsellors would say no, because most of LMI could be applicable to all types of clientele. What seems important is to create clear pathways to find specific LMI and attend to the need for information of the diverse clienteles. For example, an immigrant clientele may focus more on employment regulations and educational pathways because they need to learn more about how the system works in a given context. They might need to know that some active employment programs are available to them to find employment. Clientele with low education may need more assistance at the beginning to learn to navigate the LMI system;

(j) counsellors need to stay up to date and read LMI bulletins regularly. This is important to maintain linkages and relationships between producers of LMI (for example Public Employment Ministry) and practitioners. In Quebec, producers of IMT en ligne and REPÈRES organize regularly workshops and mini conferences, inviting practitioners to learn about the updates they do on the LMI system. These sessions are well attended.

(k) Most of the LMI tools are currently on-line, this is perceived as a real benefit and improvement.

(l) Counsellors have a role in the evaluation of the quality and trustworthy of information provided to clients. Clients often perceive counsellors as key contact person to point toward the right and trusty LMI.

2.6.2 Employers

LMI is used also by employers to place job opportunities through Placement en ligne, to develop job descriptions for human resources purposes, to compare salaries and social benefits for specific occupations, to assist in making investment decisions.

2.7 Active employment measures and policy decisions

IMT en ligne is used by employment officers to assist in decision making process in regards of eligibility of clients for a given active employment measure, such as return to school assistance to acquire a training, training on the job, job subsidy, rapid re-employment and any other active employment measures. The tool is also used for determining occupations in demand for the selection of immigrants.

2.8 Information and communication technology (ICT)

Most of the dissemination of LMI is done through IMT en ligne. Very little documentation is now available in paper format. The trend is to provide most of the information via the IMT en ligne platform.
2.9 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

2.9.1 Strengths

(a) IMT en ligne is a universal service, free of charge for all. This is considered a key component, a pillar for employment services;
(b) the support services provided by the producer of IMT en ligne for new career development practitioners constitute essential as well as on going continuous education offered to practitioners;
(c) there is a benefit of having in Canada a standardized occupational (NOC) and industry designations (NAIC) codification systems. These greatly facilitate the collection and organization of the information, and allow more easily comparative analysis between the provinces in Canada;
(d) to have in the educational curriculum of career counsellors, one or two credits course on the use of LMI;
(e) to incorporate a “needs assessment” component or focus when assisting the clientele with LMI. Development of a LMI navigation handout based on employability needs is a helpful and interesting practice;
(f) to create intuitive pathways based on employability needs, when creating a LMI website.

2.9.2 Weaknesses

(a) the IMT en ligne website is considered often as text heavy;
(b) there is a need to promote within the public in general, the existence of the IMT en ligne system. There have been in the past some public campaigns, which were successful at those moments to increase the reach of clienteles to use LMI, especially the students, but this type of activity need to be done on a regular basis;
(c) IMT en ligne is free to the public, not REPÈRES;
(d) there is no study that has been done on the impact of LMI. There is only indirect evidence of its impact on decision making purposes such as for immigration and active employment measures; identification of job shortages, occupations in demand.

2.9.3 Opportunities

(a) it would be important to create some kind of advising or overarching governance committee for the development and maintenance of LMI, in order to maintain ‘coherence’ and ‘quality’ of the LMI system. Producers and practitioners can play a key role on this type of advising committee;
(b) there is a need to understand better how the new generation really integrate technology in their lives, and how to adjust the dissemination of LMI accordingly.

2.9.4 Challenges

(a) it is challenging for a good percentage of the clientele to understand terminology associated with the dissemination of LMI;
(b) production and dissemination of LMI has been well developed in Quebec, However, investment for maintenance and integration need to be continued in order to provide a quality LMI system. It cannot be taken for granted that it could not be compromise;
(c) users wish to get very specific information at the job level, such as salary at the local level, which is very difficult to provide for costs and methodological reasons.
3. Conclusion and Transferability

When considering the potential transferability of the IMT en ligne portal, Placement en ligne and the REPÈRES system, we must take into consideration the contextual elements that make the transferability to other jurisdictional contexts, a success.

There has been a long tradition in Quebec, Canada, of career guidance counselling, mostly delivered at school level up to the 80s, and gradually implemented in the employment development and rehabilitation services provided by the public employment organizations, in the organizational and skills development services of large organizations and finally in the private practice sector. This has led to a culture of lifelong career guidance.

The career guidance field is quite professionalized in Quebec, Canada, with a regulated college in place for more than 50 years for one profession of the career guidance field, the career counsellor occupation. This had also an impact on the professional development of other occupations in the field of guidance. It is acknowledged that a competency in career and labour market information management is an essential component of a competencies profile of practitioners in the field of career guidance. This comprises the knowledge of LMI databases and portal of information, the understanding of the development of such databases, the use of LMI in the counselling process. This implies that course(s) on the use of LMI be included in the educational curriculum of career guidance counsellors and practitioners.

A common understanding of the career guidance community that a portal of career and labour market information for a given jurisdiction is considered a pillar for career guidance interventions throughout the lifespan. In Quebec, the Ministry of employment and solidarity in collaboration with the Ministry of education, are the major stakeholders of the production and dissemination of LMI through the IMT en ligne portal.

There has been an agreement in the field of career guidance, that the career and labour market information be organized around some needs based intuitive pathways for searching information. In Quebec, the model of the four employability competencies has been used to organize the collection and dissemination of LMI, that is, career decision making, skills enhancement, job search, job maintenance.

Finally, the continuous support to career guidance practitioners from the organization producing and disseminating LMI is essential to maintain quality of delivering LMI information ultimately to end-users. The Ministry of Employment and Solidarity has created over years, multiple channels of communication between the LMI producer units of the organization and the career guidance service delivery networks.
# Annex I: Agenda of the field visit

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<th>Day 5 – Thursday 7 May 2015</th>
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Annex II: References- sources of information

- Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d’orientation du Québec [ (http://orientation.qc.ca)
- REPERES. https://www.reperes.qc.ca/asp/reperes.aspx