

# **INVESTING** *in the* **FUTURE**

empowering young people

## **Career Guidance: Preparing Youth to Navigate the World of Work of the 21st century ....**

### **Notes from**

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# **Career Guidance: Preparing Youth to Navigate the World of Work of the 21st century ....**

A break-down of the following:

1. What exactly is career guidance?
2. Why is it important?
3. At which stages should it be provided and how would implementation work in or out of school settings??
4. What are the key elements of a career guidance program?
5. What approaches, methodologies and tools have been developed?

## **1. WHAT IS CAREER GUIDANCE?**

CG is sometimes interchangeable with other terms such as:

- Career counseling
- Career coaching
- Life coaching
- Personal coaching or
- Career advising

CG comes out of areas of study/disciplines such as psychology, education, sociology and labour information and economics and statistics.

There is no formal definition of the term CG adopted by Caribbean communities so I will offer one which has been used in international reviews conducted by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), the European Commission and the World Bank.

It is this:

'Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and in the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis and may be face-face or at a distance (including help lines and web based services).

## **2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

Both national and personal implications for career guidance make it a significant and important area.

National perspective - public policy

Personal perspective - the importance to individuals in society.

**FOR PUBLIC POLICY?**

Good and proper CG has implications for efficiency in labour markets and education systems.

Would it not make for more efficient utilization of scarce resources if governments could ensure that students at all levels were being prepared for the job market in the right way and would be successfully absorbed into the labour market – even if not in their own country - on completion of their education and/or training, especially when this has been paid for or subsidized by public funds?

**From a personal perspective CG is an enabler guiding** individuals to ensure employability throughout their lives, leading to more stability in families and thus in society.

Also, as we know and part of the reason that we are in this conference today is because we recognize in many cases that youth who do not receive CG – which really adds up to finding direction for their life – eventually fall through the cracks and become degenerates in the society.

Without such support, youth are not only having difficulties making career decisions and navigating the changing world of work but also in having a clear focus for their very life and existence.

CG is also becomes important as a discipline as it is a professional counselor who is given the task of assessing whether their client's aspirations for a particular job or career are realistic when reviewed against actual achievements or potential and also to help clients who had few or no job ideas to and to analyse jobs, employment and training opportunities for which they would be qualified and/or suited.

## **3. AT WHICH STAGES/DIFFERENT TIMES SHOULD IT BE PROVIDED AND HOW WOULD IMPLEMENTATION WORK IN OR OUT SCHOOL SETTINGS?**

Many differing views on this.

- The Dominant pattern around the world is implementation at the end of compulsory schooling – that is at the end of secondary.
- It is becoming popular to introduce career guidance at primary level through infusion and this is a good way to begin introducing career information.
- This should be continued into secondary with great emphasis even at lower school before students choose CSEC subjects or vocational areas of study.
- Those at the upper secondary level should still be offered career guidance as a means to assist them in the transition from secondary school onwards and this is critical.
- Those in the upper secondary levels of the education system are most catered to and benefit most from organized programmes of any sort if and where they exist.
- Conversely it is adults, whether in a workplace or unemployed, who get least exposure to such assistance.
- Those who are unattached or not part of any formal educational institution must also be catered to somehow.
- Ministries of labour have a responsibility to provide labour information and guidance for job seekers.
- Ministries of education and youth also have a role, not only for those in institutions but for the entire population.
- Job, work and employment centres are the responsibility of governments to persons at all ages and stages.

## **4. WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAM?**

A programme for career guidance must be structured to suit the needs of clients according to age and stage in order to guide them through various steps and stages in the process to enlightenment and success. The plan would include -

Helping clients in the areas of:

- Developing self-knowledge and awareness of personal skills, strengths and talents
- Giving the educational, career and occupational exposure to know what is open and available to them
- Assisting in career preparation, planning and management.
- Introducing them to a decision-making formula
- Helping in goal-setting, taking action and evaluating their progress

Also essential in the process are

Family/parental support

- Finance – programmes cannot be successfully implemented without funding
- Business/community support to ensure client assistance in education, exposure and information of business, industry opportunities in
- Staff and institutional support – everyone needs to be on board to have career information infused into all subject areas. This would require training of all school academic personnel.
- Facilities and resources where information is always accessible and available
- Research and development to be abreast of trends, subtle or otherwise.

## **5. WHAT APPROACHES, METHODOLOGIES AND TOOLS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED?**

Approaches, tools and methodologies once again vary depending on the setting, age, stage and level.

What works best in the school setting may not be appropriate in the community or work arena with differing levels of maturity and informational requirements. Those out of the school setting may benefit more from individual advising sessions even though group session still have their place.

Individual counseling is highly recommended especially where there is great uncertainty or confusion as to how to move forward.

- Print materials have been the traditional sources of information and there is a wealth of such information available and more always appearing.
- ICT-based tools, inventories or assessment and self-assessment tools, have blossomed and bloomed in recent time given the firm hold of the internet. Some of these may not be recommended.
- With modern technology also come mobile phone apps allowing persons to access information quickly, easily and at their finger tips.
- With economies facing down-turns internships are highly recommended as a means of introducing more persons to the world of work.
- The same goes for volunteering; job shadowing also as means of understanding work and work environments.
- One-stop career centres are also becoming a reality and you will hear more about this from another panelist.

In closing - it is apparent that there is much to be talked about and even more to be achieved and that governments must begin to implement the necessary policies from the highest levels if youth are to be properly prepared to navigate the changing world of work environment.