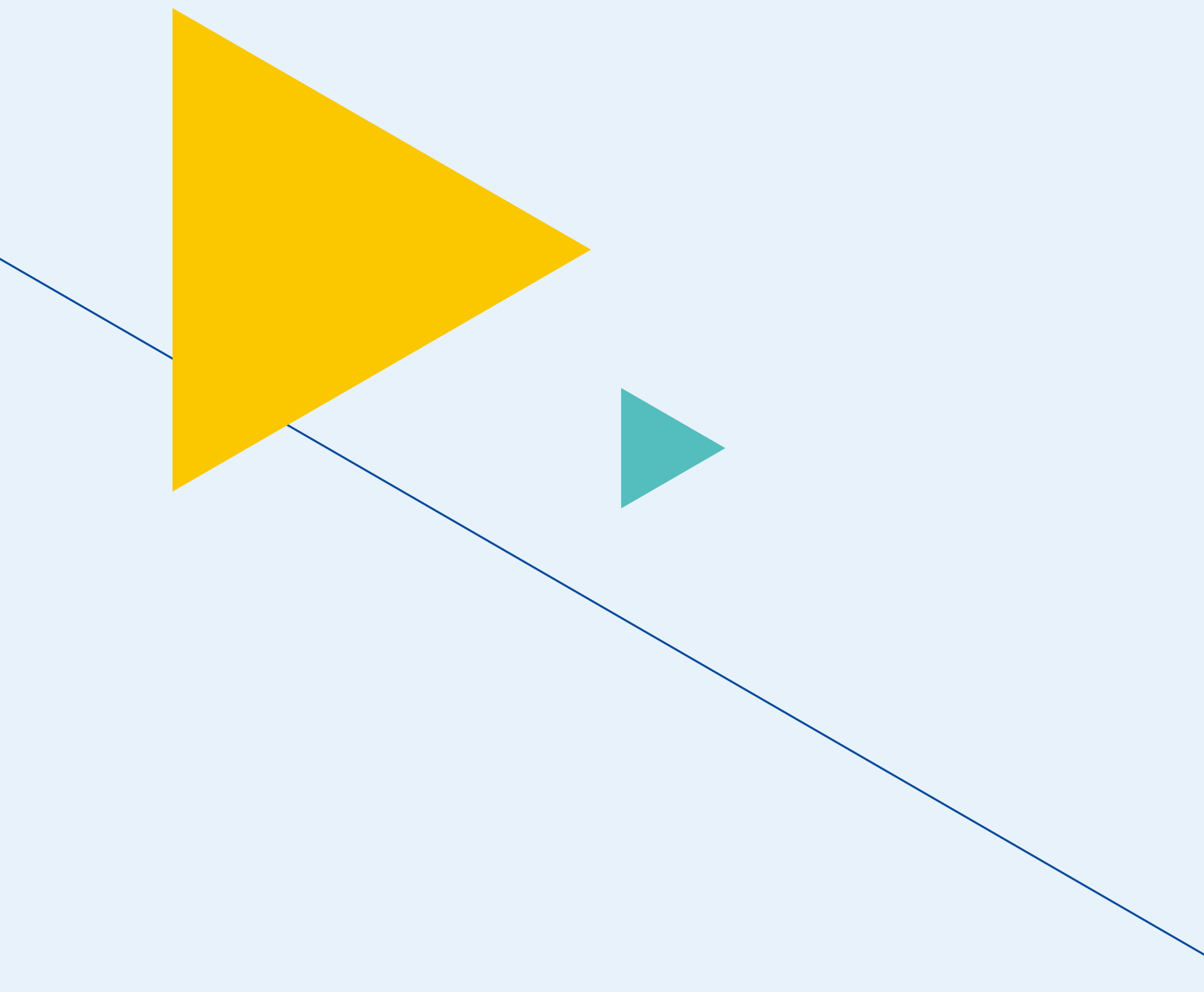
International Labour Organization

# Developing a career development framework for low- and middle-income countries

## Underpinning research for the ILO's career development framework



# Developing a career development framework for low- and middle-income countries

## Underpinning research for the ILO's career development framework

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# About this document

This document sets out the underpinning research that has led to the creation of the International Labor Organization's *Handbook for career development*.

# 1

# Introduction

The contemporary working world has been marked by ruptures and the weakening of its traditional structures, leading to the emergence of more fluid working dynamics, making it more flexible, heterogeneous, and complex. This creates, on the one hand, room for changes and innovations but, on the other hand, frequent precariousness, instability, and insecurity, as well as greater onus on the workers themselves, especially the most vulnerable populations (e.g. young people) to construct trajectories to decent work (ILO, 2022).

> *These drivers of change are challenging education and training systems to be responsive and flexible and develop new approaches to lifelong learning that supports workers in remaining employable in a fast-transforming world of work. (ILO, 2021a, p.8).*

For young people, this has led to some major challenges resulting in longer and more complex school-to-work transitions (Mann & Huddleston, 2016). If people are to live and deal with this fluid, uncertain and precarious context, they need to develop skills, behaviours, and attributes which will support them to manage their lives effectively and confidently (ILO, 2021a). They also need to see themselves as actors who are capable of shaping and transforming the societies and economies in which they live through their agency, rather than simply responding to change as it happens. This process of actively creating a pathway through life, learning and work, of managing relationships with others and with institutions can be understood as an individual's career (McCash et al., 2021; Watts, 2006). And, in a complex world, skilful and active careering is essential if people are going to find their way to decent work and the good life.

The concept of 'career' is a contested one, which is often associated with notions of status, hierarchy and class (Arnold, 2010). 'Career' is an English word (albeit one with its roots in Latin and French), replete with ambiguities and implied meanings, which may not translate in unproblematic ways in other countries (Watts, 1998). It is also a concept which achieved its modern meaning in the bureaucratic labour markets of twentieth century advanced capitalism and which consequently may struggle to find relevance and understanding in the very different contexts of low- and middle-income countries in the twenty-first century. We will return to the problematic terminology of 'career' in Chapter 2, but for now we continue to argue that it is important for individuals to build careers, especially in fluid, precarious and informal contexts.

## ▶ Career guidance

Despite the importance of career, it is rarely viewed as a key concern for the education system. Career requires skills, knowledge and aptitudes to successfully manage and develop, yet it is often assumed that such capabilities are intrinsic or acquired naturally. Such an assumption is dangerous because those who come from more advantaged backgrounds and who have more access to information, experiences, and opportunities, are typically able to gain control of their careers more rapidly and manage them with less instruction or formal help in decoding the 'rules' of career than their counterparts (Percy & Kashefpakdel, 2019).

To address this and provide individuals and groups with support, the ILO (2020b) highlights the need for good quality career guidance as part of effective education and employment systems. Career guidance is a theoretical-practical field concerned with 'transitions within the education and employment system and with enabling individuals to build a coherent narrative that links their experiences of education and employment' (Hooley & Rice, 2019, p.472). It supports individuals and groups to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to career successfully. In this sense, career guidance becomes a significant instrument to help young people manage decision-making and transition processes.

In learning settings, career guidance is often defined as career education, which aims to 'enable individuals (usually in groups) to construct an adequate representative framework for coping with the school and vocational – but also personal – transitions they encounter' (Guichard 2001, p.157) and developing attributes, skills, and knowledge to plan and manage one's career. These personal outcomes of career guidance are sometimes called Career Management Skills (CMS) (Sultana, 2012), although they frequently cover a range of outcomes that are broader than what can strictly be described as a skill. We will explore CMS in more detail in Chapter 3.

Career guidance is a global policy concern with countries all over the world involved in the development of career guidance systems (WGCG, 2021). However, access to career and employment support in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is usually much more limited than in high-income countries (Watts & Sultana, 2008). This results in the conceptual frameworks, theories, and approaches, that are used in

career guidance drawing heavily on the contexts and ways of thinking that can be found in high-income countries. It defines a vision of the world of work, which is based on the individualism of industrialised, urban, and consumerist societies that have produced versions of the work organisation, the role of work, ways of preparing for working, skills required to work, working success and values, and what a career is and how it should be developed (Ribeiro & Fonçatti, 2017).

Despite this, there is a strong case for the development of career guidance systems within low- and middle-income countries. Young and marginalised people in LMICs could benefit from increased access to career guidance to help them minimise their vulnerabilities, increase their agency and autonomy, empower them to access decent work, and increase their wellbeing. However, such approaches are only likely to be successful if forms of career guidance can be developed that are meaningful within the context of LMICs.

## ▶ About this project

This paper sets out the background research and development process for the International Labour Organization's *Career development framework*. The framework was commissioned by the ILO as a tool to support the career development of young people in LMICs. The development of a career management skills framework is designed to codify insights into what people need to be successful in their careers and to do this in a way which is particular to the contexts of LMICs.

Elsewhere the ILO have set out guidance on how LMICsshould develop career guidance systems (Hansen, 2006; ILO, 2021b). This paper and the accompanying handbook and resources are not attempting to duplicate this job, rather they are providing an underpinning resource, in a career management skills framework, that can provide individuals with insights about effective careering, practitioners with a conceptual framework that is more aligned with their cultural context, and policy makers with a tool for improving quality and coherence within career guidance systems.

# 2

# Understanding careers in low- and middle-income countries

Low- and middle-income countries encompass a wide-range of contexts. Recognition of this variety means that we should be careful about considering them as a collective. But, given that so much career theory and most career guidance policy paradigms are rooted in high-income countries it is worth reflecting on how the experience of working, learning and careering in LMICs differs.

When compared with high-income countries, work and employment in LMICs is more likely to be characterised by:

- **Inequality** which describes the gaps that exist in access to decent work, education and training opportunities, money, resources, security and stability between those at the top of society and those at the bottom (Sultana, 2017). There are also other important dimensions which shape access to opportunity, with both young people and women likely to find accessing opportunities more difficult

(Palmer, 2020; Sultana, 2017; Webster, Valodia & Francis, 2020). Gender is a particularly important dimension in many countries and impacts access to education and employment opportunities, with labour markets typically segregated along gender lines with women less likely to be able to access career supporting qualifications or to be in paid, formal and decent forms of work (Espino & Santos, 2021).

- **Informality** which describes unregulated forms of employment and self-employment with limited or no state capacity to either regulate it through labour laws including laws on the employment of children, health and safety regulation and so on or collect taxes from earnings (Castells & Portes, 1989; Espino & Santos, 2021; ILO, 2020a; Sultana, 2017). It is important to be clear that the informal sector of the economy is highly varied and includes everything from subsistence activity to highly sophisticated and profitable businesses, which sometimes include their own recruitment, training and development and promotion process, but which are operating outside of government regulation (Bertranou, 2019; Chen, 2012). One of the consequences of this informality is the typical lack of formal recruitment practices and the reliance on social and kinship networks as a mechanism for accessing work and getting on within such informal careers (Sultana, 2017).

- **Instability** which describes a fluctuating economy and labour market in which forms of work come and go due to both cyclical and non-cyclical variations (Sarr, 2015). Such economic instability is often linked to political instability and can generate increased precarity and lack of security (Antunes, 2021; Sultana, 2017).

- **Lack of social security and other forms of state support.** Many low- and middle-income countries have limited underpinning structures and institutions, provided by the state or any other body, to ensure the health and wellbeing of individuals during periods when they experience a drop in income or the loss of work (Antunes, 2021; Spink, 2011).

- **Precariousness** describes a lack of regularity and permanence in work which is intertwined with the wider instability of the labour market, but not necessarily alleviated by stabilisation (Ribeiro & Fonçatti, 2017). Precarious work is often co-terminus with various other 'non-standard forms of employment' which are characterised by home working, temporary, seasonal, part-time and multi-party employment relations (ILO, n.d.).

- **Outmigration and forced displacement.** As many people are unable to find work and opportunities within their own country, it is common for workers in low- and middle-income countries to migrate to other countries where opportunities are thought to be more plentiful (Sultana, 2017). The ILO estimates that migrant workers make up 4.9% of the global labour force, with the flow of migrants typically moving from LMICs towards high income countries. In extreme cases migration is involuntary and driven by war, environmental change, poverty or political instability.

- **Poor signalling in the labour market** which describes a lack of information, understanding of skills and channels for communication and brokerage between employers and workers.

- **Public sector employment being viewed as the strongest career path.** Many countries have a weak (formal) private sector, leading to an understanding that the public sector provides the safest pathway for career building (Sultana, 2017).

- **Unemployment and underemployment** which describes the inability of economies to use the skills and labour available to them, as well as market failures which result in poor matching.

Many of these factors are intertwined, leading to a vicious circle which has contributed to the stubborn persistence of high levels of labour market informality in LMICsdespite a range of policy initiatives (ILO, 2020a). For example, investment in technology in India, coupled with economic growth does not appear to have led to a reduction in the number of individuals working in the informal economy (ILO, 2020a).

In many countries the issues with the labour market are intertwined with a range of issues in the

education system. The evidence suggests that lower-educated individuals are more likely to end up working in the informal economy (ILO, 2020a). Key systemic issues that low- and middle-income countries report include:

- **Low levels of completion of basic education** (Palmer, 2020) with those from the poorest sections of society least likely to complete their education (Sultana, 2017).
- **Limited access to formal qualifications.** In many cases formal qualifications provide an entry route into the formal economy, but access to qualifications is often restricted to individuals on the basis of money, language, geography, performance in basic schooling and wider family expectations and resources (Swartz, Cooper, Batan & Causa, 2021).
- **Under-developed vocational education systems** with limited access to formal training and a lack of flexible pathways and work-based learning. Many learners may also encounter high barriers to entry (e.g. access criteria, cost, lack of suitable conditions for women to learn). In addition, there are frequently issues with the status of vocational learning leading some individuals and their families to be sceptical of the value of pursuing vocational rather than academic pathways (Sultana, 2017). This means that work-based learning often happens in informal and unrecognised ways on the job (Spink, 2011).
- **Limited access to higher education** with the elites most likely to benefit from education at this level. Even where people do graduate from higher education there are often challenges for them in finding where to use their skills within the local economy (Sultana, 2017) and this can lead to high levels of 'brain drain'.

While many of these features of poor-quality work and limited education could also be found in high-income countries, they are more likely to be a minority experience. Conversely, in many low- to middle-income countries a large minority or even a majority of individuals work in the informal economy. Around 60% of the world's population participates in the informal economy, which equates to two billion workers worldwide (Golman & Ernst, 2022). Jobs in the informal economy can range from survivalist activities to working within dynamic informal firms that are avoiding regulation, with jobs including micro and small enterprises, street vendors, apprentices, waste collectors, mechanics, and unpaid family workers (Skinner & Watson, 2017; Palmer, 2020). On average the informal economy represents 35% of GDP in LMICs, compared to 15% in advanced economies (IMF, 2021). But there is considerable regional variation with 92% of workers in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Southern Africa) being part of the informal economy, while in Southern Asia it is 88% of workers, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia it is 37% and in Latin America and the Caribbean 54% (Women in Informal Employment, 2021).

## ▶ Is 'career' meaningful in such contexts?

The labour market and educational conditions described above result in a lower resonance for the concept of 'career', with its associations with structured, hierarchical progression and individual agency. In low- and middle-income countries people are less likely to be making purposeful career choices and more likely to be 'getting by' (Spink, 2011) through picking up work here and there, motivated by the need for money to live on rather than a more long-term concept of career development. Even where people access the formal economy, many individuals in low- and middle-income countries will supplement inadequate income gained in the formal economy by undertaking further work within the informal economy (Coletto & Bisschop, 2017). Given the limited space that exists for proactive and agentic career choice, it is unsurprising that for many countries, developing a government funded career guidance service is not a high priority (Watts & Fretwell, 2004).

These various factors have led some commentators to question the value of the career concept and argue that alternatives such as 'livelihood' may be more suitable for LMIC contexts (Arulmani, 2014). However, others are less willing to abandon the concept of career, arguing instead that it should be reconstructed in new ways that are meaningful to people whose experience of work and life is divorced from structured pathways through learning and work and may not identify with any occupation (Ribeiro & Fonçatti, 2017).

A new career concept would need to consider both the economic and cultural contexts of different countries. It would need to recognise that both the learning and working context and the competencies required for career development and management are directly dependent on cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Culture, in this sense, refers to symbolic systems which arrange social life through shared values, knowledge, and practices (Silva et al. 2016). Ribeiro (2020) notes that there are cultural expectations and values which play a significant role in career construction which can strongly influence the desire and ability to have a career. These may include a variety of different cultural values which emphasise family, kinship networks, community, traditional gender roles, and religion in ways that may be in tension with individualistic constructions of the career concept. The cultural issues that are important in relation to career are likely to vary between countries, as well as within them, but may include fundamentally different assumptions about what constitutes work, how important paid work is and what motivates and enables people to work (Sultana, 2017).

In this project we have sought to understand the concept of 'career' broadly as people's pathways through life, learning, and work as well as the way that they understand those pathways and accord them meaning. It is not just the hierarchical progression through formal occupations, but a way of thinking about the journey that all people take through their life. Engaging with this concept has huge potential for individuals to develop their own lives and consider how they can contribute to their community and society. However, because we recognise that some people in low- and middle-income countries might hesitate at the idea that they have a *career* we have also utilised the concept of *livelihood*. The terminology of livelihood is used here to describe the capabilities, material and social resources and activities required for people to live their lives.

The twin concepts of career and livelihood are therefore used to describe the different but overlapping ways in which people live their lives in low- and middle-income countries. These are not two distinct experiences, but rather different ways to understand the experience of work and life. Both address how people manage their lives and work in order to create a positive existence, but career adds the concept of progression, highlighting the fact that it is possible to change your life through your own agency. Agency describes the individual's capacity to shape their own lives. Career guidance seeks to build the agency of individuals and groups, whilst also recognising that there are different possibilities to exercise agency in different countries, contexts, and cultures. We are not developing a full framework for livelihood development, which would require a discussion of a wider set of interventions and initiatives, but rather acknowledging the need to consider key aspects of livelihood development to assign meaning to the idea of career in LMIC contexts.

By bringing the concepts of career and livelihood together it is possible to create a conceptual framework through which people can recognise the agency that they have over their lives and develop their consciousness about the ways in which this agency is bounded by the structures in which they are careering. The concept of career and livelihood development is designed to provide a vehicle for reflecting on and operationalising this agency as it suggests that we can all exert some agency on our lives with the aim of improving them.

The idea of career and livelihood development is therefore a broad one, which different people might operationalise in different ways, and which will often be dependent upon the situations that individual lives in. For some, it will be about seeking employment, negotiating access to the formal economy, or seeking promotion, while for others it will be about balancing life and work, playing a role in your family or community or starting an enterprise or social enterprise. During the text "career development" and "career and livelihood development" will be used interchangeably, but the meaning ascribed to "career

development" will imply the discussion of skills and attitudes that support careering in this diversity of contexts.

In low- and middle-income countries, many people's careers run through the informal economy or exist in between the formal and informal economies. For some, career and livelihood development might be viewed in terms of their progress towards the formal economy, but for others, it may be possible to develop their career and livelihood either outside or alongside formal structures. Careering is always the art of the possible and we must recognise that while individuals can exert influence and change their lives, the lives of those around them and the opportunity structures, people cannot control everything in their careers.

## ▶ Challenges in career guidance provision

As already noted, formal career guidance services have emerged primarily from high income countries. Although high income countries also have vulnerable populations, these contexts are defined by stability, high levels of qualifications, formal jobs, career continuity, and individuality. Consequently, such countries have developed forms of career guidance which rely on the assumption that people have autonomy and freedom of choice, that they can make informed career choices in contexts in which formalised labour market and social protection institutions and policies provide educational and working opportunities and career development support. Given the high degree of economic formalisation and the high development of institutions, career related interventions tend to be offered in the context of public services in formal education, employment policies and social protection (Arulmani 2014; Maree 2020; Ribeiro 2021 and 2022; Sultana 2018).

Within low- and middle-income countries there are formalised labour markets and well-developed educational systems which resemble those found in high-income countries. But many people living and working in low and middle-income countries experience careers which are characterised by social inequality and vulnerability (e.g., Brazil has a Gini coefficient of 49 and South Africa, 60 in comparison with a <35 average in high income countries, World Bank, 2023). Informality, low qualification, insufficient income, uncertainty, career discontinuity, gaps in social protection coverage, and the need for social and State support to survive have defined most LMIC countries (Antunes, 2021; Bertranou, 2019; ILO, 2020b).

Regarding youth in LMICs , we might add that they generally have limited State support, little access to a formal qualification, and learning for work happens to a great extent on the job. We should also stress that women and ethnic minorities face more obstacles to getting work and staying in work, and illiteracy and digital divide are very common realities, drawing attention to the limitations of increasingly popular digital solutions (ILO 2023).

For the most part, the contexts of the LMICs are distinct from the contexts of the high-income countries. Therefore, career guidance needs to reflect different opportunity structures, cultural understandings, and institutional make-ups (e.g., career guidance interventions cannot be exclusively based on formal education and training institutions and occur in an extended way in existing social resources such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and community associations). Furthermore, career guidance provision in such countries is often disproportionately available to the elites (Silva, Paiva, Ribeiro, 2016; Ribeiro, Uvaldo, & Silva, 2015) and is frequently accessed either through the (private) education system or through a market in guidance which is reliant on individuals' ability to pay. Without systematic public policy on career guidance, it is more difficult for individuals from outside of the elites to benefit from a careers service (Silva, Paiva & Ribeiro, 2016).

Where LMICs have attempted to develop wider forms of career guidance for the population, they have often attempted to leverage the existing professionalism and infrastructure available through the education system (Khalil, 2015). One consequent of blending career guidance into the education

system is that the development of a career guidance profession lags behind the establishment of career guidance programmes with for example, teachers without any special training in career guidance, often responsible for delivery.

For many people in LMICs , career support is most likely to be accessed from immediate families and wider kinship networks (Sultana, 2017). Such support may be very different in nature from professional career guidance and may come with a range of assumptions about what an individual should do.

## ▶ Regional variations in career guidance provision

As already noted, the literature on career guidance provision in LMICs is relatively limited. In this section we will briefly summarise what is known about career guidance systems and models in the five ILO focus areas: Africa, the Arab states, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

### Africa

There has been very little systematic comparative work on career guidance across Africa. However, the literature reveals a wide range of practice in countries across Africa, with a concentration of expertise in South Africa (Albien, 2021; Maree, 2013).

The launch of the *African Journal of Career Development* in 2019 marked an important moment in the development of a pan-African community of practice. Articles remain focused on South Africa, but there are also papers exploring career development in Nigeria, Togo and Uganda. In general, South Africa has a relatively well-developed career guidance system, while most other countries in the region either have emergent systems or relatively little.

### Arab States

In contrast to sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East have a long history of experimentation with career guidance policy and practice (Sultana, 2017). Sultana's book on Southern Europe and the MENA region covers the provision of career guidance in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Anecdotally we are aware of further experiments with career guidance in the Gulf States.

Despite the widespread nature of career guidance in the Arab world, it is often quite fragile and reliant on external funding from international bodies. Because of this provision tends to ebb and flow rather than remain as a permanent feature of policy systems.

### Asia and the Pacific

The literature on career guidance in Asia and the Pacific is much more developed than in many of the other regions discussed here. However, it is dominated by the experience of high-income countries like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (Lee et al., 2013). However, there is also interest in career guidance in China (Zhang et al., 2002) and Hong Kong (Wong & Yuen, 2019), India (Arulmani, 2009), Malaysia (Pope et al., 2002), Singapore (Tan & Goh, 2002), Viet Nam (Loan & Van, 2015) and other countries, although the balance of the research base remains weighted towards high income countries.

As discussed above, much of the research in this area emphasises the importance of collectivist thinking about career development and argues that given this, group based and collectivist approaches to career guidance might be particularly relevant (Pope, 1999).

## Europe and Central Asia

Career guidance is well established in Europe and more emergent in Central Asia. Within Europe there are a wide number of institutions designed to develop career guidance e.g. Euroguidance, Cedefop and previously the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. Career guidance has also been a main focus of activity for the European Training Foundation which works with the countries that neighbour the EU to develop their education and training systems.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

Career guidance is well established in many Latin American and Caribbean countries and emergent in others (González Bello & Ledezma, 2009). In countries like Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Venezuela there is access to public programmes to support career development, mainly in schools and at labour intermediation agencies, promoting the integration between education and training and the world of work. However, on the other hand, countries like Brazil, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic offer few public actions to support career development, with career guidance in these countries mainly focused on specific private initiatives. Most of the programmes to support career development are addressed to urban youth, which leaves a gap in the rural context regarding this type of public policy. A recent OECD report explored adult guidance services in Latin America, concluding that career guidance rarely serves adults well across the region (OECD, 2021).

# ▶ Reconceptualising career guidance for low- and middle-income countries

The career guidance that is available in low- and middle-income often draws strongly on imported theories, models and assumptions from high-income countries, which potentially reduces its ability to speak meaningfully to the experience of those careering in low- and middle-income countries (Ribeiro & Fonçatti, 2017; Silva et al., 2016). This is particularly the case for those who are outside of the elites and for whom agentic assumptions about career choice are particularly problematic (Ribeiro & Fonçatti, 2017). Given this, it is necessary to reframe the purpose of career guidance in such contexts as being about fostering an understanding of structures and social contexts and a consideration about how these barriers can be navigated and challenged.

Models for effective career guidance in LMICs highlight a range of approaches that may be appropriate. These include increased recognition of the context and culture within which career guidance is happening, the theories that underpin career guidance and the approaches to delivery.

## Recognising context, community and culture

Effective career guidance within LMICs needs to be highly aware of the context and culture within which it is taking place.

An understanding of culture needs to be built through an intercultural dialogue with local practitioners and users of career guidance (Silva et al. 2016). This may include engagement with community organisations and social movements to allow for co-construction of strategies and approaches. Such an approach brings together career development practitioners (holders of technical knowledge) with the actors in the contexts where the project will be carried out (holders of everyday knowledge). Ideally, a career education model should be proposed by a group or community and connected to existing projects

with other purposes (e.g., the development of social entrepreneurship in poor communities, community gardens, community leadership development, working training programmes in trade unions).

Along with a recognition of community and culture, it is also important to recognise the key role that is played by families and kinship networks within LMICs and to find ways to acknowledge and include these relationships within career guidance.

## Using relevant theories

Building effective career guidance requires great care in the mobilisation of concepts associated with career development in high-income countries. For example, being a worker in the informal economy is different from being an entrepreneur in more developed countries. It configures two sides of work arrangements, the former is commonly marked by precariousness and the latter by autonomy, and we need to be careful to not equalise the individualistic discourse of entrepreneurism with working in the informal sector to avoid producing undue tolerance for several forms of precariousness. For example, in many work contexts in Latin America, the term entrepreneur has been used to describe young workers who have small informal businesses (e.g., street vendors, deliverers of goods, and domestic servants). On the one hand, this definition produces a social validation of the working activity; however, on the other hand, it covers up the precariousness of the work performed, minimising actions to improve conditions or support from the State. These are working activities usually performed by women, with low remuneration, low qualification, and high insecurity, determining a significant gender disadvantage (United Nations [UN], 2020).

It is important to rethink conceptual frameworks and reconstruct practices to produce contextualised career education programmes and activities, acknowledging the implications of context because 'context matters' (Sultana, 2018, p.48). In this sense, 'valid knowledge is therefore contextualised knowledge. It is valid when it considers cultural differences and political differences. It should be oriented toward reality, which is taken both as a starting and an arrival point' (Silva et al. 2016, 48). Arulmani et al. (2011, p.62) complement this idea by asserting that theories should have 'a sensitivity to differences coupled with an interest in identifying unifying or universal concepts'.

There is also a need for career guidance to actively align itself with social justice and the need for social and economic development. The ILO (2019) emphasises a human-centred approach to the future of work by strengthening individual and institutional capacities and resources. This means that career guidance needs to support a just transition to work, a dignified working life, gender equality at work, decent work in the diverse forms of working arrangement, effective lifelong learning for all, universal access to social protection, and 'recognizing the extent of informality and the need to ensure effective action to achieve transition to formality' (p. 7).

## Deploying appropriate approaches to practice

The evidence suggests that it is important to start career guidance early, ideally in primary education both to ensure that there is widespread access to career guidance to engage with vocational and career identities before they are fully formed (Brewer, 2013).

Career guidance needs to be able to be accessed in a variety of ways and through different modes. Individuals need to be able to access career guidance both in face-to-face formats through schools, community hubs, NGOs and public employment services as well as via online services/portals and telephone support (Flederman & Watts, 2014).

In low- and middle-income countries there is often a need to deliver career guidance in new and creative ways which rely less on the existence of structured and formalised learning spaces. In such contexts career guidance may be practised in informal and happenstance settings such as career learning that takes place while people are on the job and learning from more experienced colleagues (ILO, 2012). The informal professional learning in which adults from young people's home communities invite them to help with work activities is a good example of this career learning space and how career management skills can be developed through contact with more experienced people.

# 3

# Why is a career management skills framework needed?

The ILO has already developed a global framework for core skills (ILO, 2021a). This framework articulates a set of non-technical skills, such as social and emotional, cognitive and metacognitive, basic digital skills and basic skills for green jobs, transferable across occupations and professions, as well as between low- and high-level jobs. Both core skills and technical skills are required by individuals if they are to become employable, manage their careers in a fast-changing world of work, use digital technology at work and in everyday life, achieve life goals and contribute to their own well-being and that of their community.

Within the ILO core skills framework, the issue of 'career management' is highlighted and defined as follows.

> *The ability to establish, plan and work towards the achievement of short- and long-term goals having both tangible and intangible success criteria. The ability to exchange information and ideas with individuals and groups that share a common interest, developing relationships for mutual benefit. The ability to use labour market information and intelligence to help identify work opportunities, understand work contexts and work conditions and apply job-search skills. (p.31)*

The ILO identified that there was a need to deepen the discussion of career management skills to help stakeholders to work with this concept. In this chapter we will discuss a range of pre-existing career management skills frameworks which all have their origins in high-income countries. While these resources are useful, the discussion in the last chapter highlights why it is sub-optimal to import career management skills frameworks from high-income countries, and it was therefore determined that the ILO should develop a bespoke CMS framework for low- and middle-income countries, which can then be used as a baseline which countries can adapt and develop to suit their own needs and contexts.

## ▶ Existing career management skills frameworks?

At its most basic a career management skills framework is a summary of the skills, competences and attributes that individuals need to develop their careers successfully. Various career management skills frameworks exist across the world which set out lists of the key competencies that individuals need in their careers (Hooley et al., 2013; Neary et al., 2016; Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, 2021; Sultana, 2012). Perhaps the most influential frameworks have been described as the 'blueprint' frameworks and can be found in the USA, Canada and Australia. These organise career management skills around the areas of personal management, learning and careers (Hooley et al., 2013).

More recent frameworks have experimented with new concepts and ways of organising a CMS framework, for example, Scotland organises its career management skills under four headings (self, strengths, horizons, and networks) (Skills Development Scotland, n.d.). In contrast, the Norwegian CMS framework (Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, 2021) presents the learning areas as oxymorons or dilemmas which individuals must work through.

- Me and context
- Change and stability
- Adaption and resistance
- Choice and chance
- Opportunities and limitations

While the new English CMS framework offers six competency areas, presented as aphorisms (Hooley, 2021b).

- Grow throughout life
- Explore possibilities
- Manage career
- Create opportunities
- Balance life and work
- See the big picture

In most of these frameworks the top-level articulation of the skills or competency areas are underpinned by a series of more detailed and specific skills. For example, the English framework breaks down its 'Explore possibilities' area into the following sub-competencies (CDI, 2021).

- Thinking about what jobs and roles to pursue
- Finding and making use of labour market information and information about the education system
- Understanding learning pathways and how to access and succeed in them
- Recognising the relationship between learning, qualifications and work
- Building awareness about workplaces, workplace culture and expectations
- Analysing and preparing for recruitment and selection processes.

Such pre-existing lists of skills provide a useful starting point for the creation of a new career management skills framework. But it is important to understand that the lists of skills that they identify as being required for successful careering, have emerged through the experience of experts, careers practitioners and policy makers and do not have a strong empirical basis to demonstrate that the skills that they advance are correlated with career success (however defined). We will explore this further in the next section of this review.

## ▶ Element of career management skills frameworks

It is also important to highlight that while the lists of competencies in career management skills frameworks tend to receive the most attention, a career management skills framework is typically more than a list of skills. Hooley et al. (2013) argue that the core elements of a career management skills framework are the career learning areas (the list of skills); the learning model (how these skills are acquired); and the levels (describing the stages that an individual is likely to go through in competence accumulation and often, but not always, making a connection with age and wider educational stage). Chapter 5 will show that we have broadly adopted this structure in the creation of the ILO framework, although instead of levels, we have used 'contexts' as the third element of the framework. This approach was also used in the career management skills framework for Scotland.

In addition to the core elements of career management skills frameworks, Hooley et al. (2013) also set out a series of 'contextual elements' that highlight the fact that a framework only becomes an effective tool when it is situated within a broader policy framework and implemented through the provision of resources, and the development of a service delivery approach (such as being embedded with a school curriculum) and supported through a community of practice.


# 4

# Developing the ILO career management skills framework

The development of the ILO career management skills framework was undertaken across four stages.

- Literature review
- Expert interviews
- Synthesis of the framework
- Consultation on the framework and handbook.

# ▶ Literature review

The first stage used a literature review to explore the key concepts and examine existing career management skills frameworks. Most of the findings of this stage of the project are presented in Chapters 2 and 3. This literature-based investigation drew on ILO literature and wider academic and policy literatures to explore the nature of careering in LMICs, to examine approaches to career guidance and consider the philosophical questions behind the construction of a career management skills framework for LMICs.

The literature review was also used to identify a series of concepts that could be included in the initial design of the framework. These were drawn from two parallel investigations into skills needs: firstly, what skills are needed to manage careers in low- and middle-income countries; and secondly what research evidence exists on the impact of different career management skills on career success.

## What skills does it take to succeed in informal economies?

Articulations of career management skills have historically assumed a formal labour market which consists of employers of varying sizes with the capability for human resource management, professional bodies and trade unions all underpinned by a developed education and skills systems and summative qualifications through which skills can be communicated (Watts, 2015).

Given this and the likelihood that many of these conditions will not be met in some LMICs and particularly that they will not be met for all workers, it is likely that what constitutes career management skills will be somewhat different from that in high-income countries. There is very limited research which specifically addresses career management skills, but some research which explores skills more generally in these contexts. In Table 1, we group these skills under three headings. Firstly, we identify skills which have been highlighted in studies on low- and middle-income contexts which can be understood as the management of individuals' pathway through life, learning, and work (career management skills). Secondly, we identify employability skills which are important to be able to be successful in the workplace (employability skills), and thirdly we identify wider skills which underpin social and economic participation (underpinning skills). The boundaries between these three categories are porous and all were considered as relevant inputs at the point at which we synthesised the framework.

▶ **Table 1. The evidence on skills in low- and middle-income countries**

| Career management skills | Employability skills | Underpinning skills |
|---|---|---|
| **Awareness of public**, community **and privat**e sources **of career support** | | **Communication skills** (ILO, 2021b) including oral and written communication (Brewer, 2013) |
| **Career decision making** (Khalil, 2015) | **Conflict resolution** and negotiation (ILO, 2021b) | **Critical thinking** (ILO, 2021b) and **information literacy** (ILO, 2021b) |
| **Collective action** to access opportunities and decent work (e.g. participation in social movements) | **Emotional intelligenc**e (ILO, 2021b) | **Digital skills** (ILO, 2020a, 2021a) |
| **Entrepreneurship** and the identification of opportunities in the informal economy (Webb et al., 2013) | | Environmental awareness (ILO, 2021b) |
| **Networking** and social capital (Sultana, 2017) | **Learning agility** / learning on the job | **Literacy** (Brewer, 2013, ILO, 2021b) |
| **Opportunity awareness** (Khalil, 2015) | **Maintaining employment** (Khalil, 2015) | |
| **Recognition of the importance of education** (Palmer, 2020) | **Problem solving** (ILO, 2021b) | Planning and organising (ILO, 2021b) |
| **Self-awareness** (Khalil, 2015) | **Teamwork** (Brewer, 2013) and collaboration (ILO, 2021b) | |
| **Transition skills** (Khalil, 2015; Palmer, 2020) | | |

## Wider evidence on career management

As discussed already, while existing career management skills frameworks provide a useful starting point for the development of new frameworks, they are rarely based on strong empirical evidence about what skills, knowledge and personal attributes are associated with career success. Following on from the last section where we looked at the limited specific evidence around careering in LMICs, and this section looks more broadly and summarises the wider evidence on career management skills and career success.

It is worth noting that the concept of career success is a notoriously slippery and ideological one. De Vos and Soens (2008) distinguish between objective (e.g. salary, seniority and position) and subjective measures (e.g. wellbeing and job satisfaction). Although Abele and Spurk (2009a) find that there is a strong inter-relationship between objective and subjective forms of career success, with subjective success particularly important in driving objective success. Ng and Feldman (2014) undertook a metanalytic review of what led to subjective career success and found that disposition (e.g. emotional stability), motivation, engagement in work and social networks were all predictors of subjective career success. The distinction between objective and subjective success obscures considerable grey areas and potentially leaves out a number of areas which may be culturally important in the current study (e.g. how family and community perceive success, how you align work with values, beliefs and wider life). Nonetheless, for the purpose of developing a career management skills framework we are interested in surfacing any competencies that have been supported by evidence and so we are taking a broad and inclusive definition of career success.

Reviewing this literature reminds us that career management skills do not simply describe skills, but rather a broader set of personal attributes which can support career development. For this study we are not interested in the way that personal differences with limited or no malleability influence career success. It is very likely that different physical, psychological, intellectual and social traits are associated with career success, but if it is not possible to change them through career guidance type interventions, we would argue that they should not be included in a career management skills framework. For example, there is evidence that height is associated with career success, but as career guidance cannot make you taller, this is not helpful to include in a career management skills framework (Judge & Cable, 2004).

This leads us to the issue of personality, where there is considerable evidence that an individual's personality (typically measured through the 'big five' traits of openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism) has an impact on their likelihood of career success (Judge et al., 1999). Again, this raises the issue as to the degree of malleability, are personality traits more like height (which is not very malleable) or more like knowledge of an occupation (which is very malleable)? There is an extensive debate about the malleability of personality that it is not useful to rehearse here. Instead, we are viewing the development of career management skills as an intervention into learning processes whereby individuals' skills and knowledge are developed alongside their capacity to intervene into the world. It is likely that such processes may also have an impact on shaping personality or its expression, but this is not their primary focus.

It is also worth noting that there is a wealth of evidence that emphasises the impact of human capital and both formal qualifications and informal experience on career success (Johnson & Eby, 2011; Hooley, 2021a). However, this kind of wider human capital cannot be understood as a 'career management skill' and has therefore been excluded from the list below. It would be possible to make the argument that a positive orientation towards education and lifelong learning should be construed as a career management skill even if the results of such an orientation do not quality as CMS.

More of a grey area exists around the evidence on wider forms of capital such as the Bourdieusian capitals (financial, social and cultural capital, Bourdieu, 1986) and other ideas that are derived from or related to these capitals e.g. Schuller's (2010) capitals (social capital, human capital and identity capital). The metaphor of 'capital' reminds us that while individuals may have resources and capabilities, such capital is only accorded value when it is traded within networks of social relations. So, while the language of 'skills' focuses on the individual accumulation of competence, the metaphor of capital recognises the interaction between such individual competence and the often dynamic and unequal social world. In other words, possessing a skill may not be sufficient if, you do not know when it is appropriate to use it or if you do not have an appropriate social environment within which it can be used.

The metaphor of capital has also been embraced within the careers field as a way of conceptualising how personal career resources are embedded in social relations. Various researchers have therefore sought to define 'career capital' as a series of relational competencies which enable individuals to build successful careers (Brown et al., 2020; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Mayrhofer et al., 2004). In doing so, many have effectively built empirically grounded career management skills frameworks and also described how such competences are embedded within social, organisational and economic systems. For example, Mayrhofer et al. (2004) restate the Bourdieusian capitals as career capital; what I know; whom I know and who knows about me, and what I possess. But they also recognise that such career capitals are 'spent' within organisational and wider economic systems and that shapes and reshapes their value.

The concept of 'social capital' provides an example of some of this complexity which we can reflect on as we consider how such concepts might be integrated into career management skills frameworks. Social capital is usually used to describe the quality and quantity of relationships, resources and networks that bond people together (Johnson & Eby, 2011). But different traditions frame this concept in different ways, with research drawing on Putnam viewing social capital simultaneously and unproblematically as an individual and community resource while Bourdieu's tradition views it primarily as a mechanism through which class and other social hierarchies are maintained (Siisiainen, 2003). Such conceptual differences raise important questions about how such concepts should be addressed in career management skills.

Is the relevant career management skill the ability to build social connections with those around you or is it the ability to analyse hierarchies and forge connections that facilitate the climbing of the social ladder? Empirical work on social capital often draws on both traditions and frequently finds that the possession of more social capital is related to various measurements of career success including the total number of promotions during an entire career as well current salary (Cocchiara et al., 2010; Seibert *et al.,* 2001). It is therefore likely that both knowing more people and knowing more people in the social elites are part of the recipe for career success. However, to transform this observation of social relations into a career management skill we need to highlight things like the ability to analyse social structures, build relationships and manage social networks whilst still recognising that such career management skills are enacted in relational social contexts and that the accumulation of more skills is not, on its own, a recipe for career success.

The discussion above reminds us that we should exercise some caution when looking at the evidence for causal relationships between career management skills and career outcomes. In many cases the question should not be 'what works?' but rather 'when and where might this work?'. Nonetheless, the fact that many people have posited arguments about what career management skills lead to career success without strong empirical and causal evidence to back up this relationship is worthy of note. It is therefore worth looking at the specific evidence that exists on the impacts of career management skills, whilst also recognising that just because something is an effective career strategy in one context, it may not work, or may work differently in another context.

Existing research has noted the relationship between the following career management skills and various kinds of career success.

- **Capacity to build relationships and networks.** We have already discussed the importance of social capital above. There is evidence that people who actively develop inter-personal relationships and networks to support their career report greater levels of subjective career success (Eby et al., 2003).

- **Career adaptability.** The ability to continuously adapt to changing circumstances by drawing on your own resources and analysing the nature of change has been described as 'career adaptability' (Savickas, 1997). There is evidence which suggests that people with high levels of career adaptability report more subjective (Zacher, 2014) and objective (Guan et al., 2013) career success.

- **Goal setting.** Where individuals are able to define their career goals and use these to guide their actions they are more likely to report career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009b).

- **Personal career development.** There is evidence that those who proactively develop their skills and capacities, for example by engaging in training activities, report higher levels of subjective career success (Eby et al., 2003).

- **Proactivity/career self-directedness.** Research suggests that individuals who take proactive action to develop themselves and their career experience better career outcomes (De Vos & Soens, 2008; Eby et al., 2003; Seibert et al., 2001). There is also evidence to suggest that this capability can be improved through participation in career guidance (Verbruggen & Sels, 2008).

- **Self-efficacy.** Individuals who believe in their capability to execute a plan of action report better career outcomes (Tentama & Nur, 2021). This is particularly true in relation to domain specific forms of self-efficacy that are career relevant. So, Abele & Spurk (2009) explored occupational self-efficacy which they define as the belief in one's capacity and motivation to be good at your job and succeed within that occupation field. They found moderate correlations between occupational self-efficacy and both objective and subjective measures of career success. There is also good evidence to suggest that career development interventions can increase self-efficacy (Brown & Krane, 2000; Falco & Summers, 2017).

# ▶ Expert interviews

The skills highlighted in the literature review were used to develop an interview schedule for a series of expert interviews with 19 international experts in career development and skills, who have worked extensively in LMICs. The aim of these interviews was to establish an understanding of what skills are needed to be successful and what 'career' looks like across these regions. These interviews provided insights into the concept of career across multiple countries and how access to decent work and any kind of career guidance varies. This section summarises the findings from the interviews that were carried out and organises the findings under key themes: careers in low-middle-income countries; cultural issues; skills needed for success; and the development of a framework.

## Careers in low-middle-income countries

**What is career?** Career is a term and concept that is not understood in the way in LMICs as in high-income countries. For many individuals working in lower-middle-income countries, career decisions are based on immediate needs and not on educational or occupational aspirations. This fixation in the moment and limited future perspective, results in reduced salience for the concept of career. Within such contexts individuals often fall into work which may be exploitative and offer limited possibilities for advancement, but which provides a way to provide for themselves and their family. In addition, the precarity of the labour market in many low- and middle-income countries, where work is often characterised by temporary, part-time and seasonal work (typically in agriculture and tourism) also contributes to a lack of long-term planning and the failure to view career as a relevant concept.

**Employment.** Across many low- and middle-income countries there are high levels of unemployment and low levels of basic education. Some informants noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had exacerbated these educational and employment issues. The informants also described a labour market where the supply side, i.e., education and training, is producing high numbers of workers who are poorly aligned with the requirements of employers. This is typified by the weak position of technical and vocational education (TVET) in many of these countries, and by the over-production of graduates for whom appropriate jobs do not exist. This poor alignment in many countries between the education system and employment has meant that there are significant gaps in the job market in which jobs are not being filled because individuals do not have appropriate skills. Many of these educational and employment issues are concentrated amongst particular groups and demographics with access to opportunities clearly shaped by education, finances, resources, gender and age. In some cases this leads to the segregation of the labour market by demographic characteristics.

**Formal and informal economy**. The distinction between the formal and informal labour market was another key issue identified by our informants. They highlighted that formal and informal labour markets operate by very different rules and that in LMICs, the informal economy remains a critical part of many people's careers. For many countries, the informal labour market overpowers the formal labour market, with high numbers of informal workers in jobs such as roadside vendors, market stall workers, agricultural work, waste collection and food delivery services as well as in criminal gangs and other forms of anti-social activities. However, these kinds of low-skilled and precarious jobs do not describe the whole of the informal labour market, which also comprises of a range of higher skilled roles, in more developed organisations, which nonetheless operate outside of government jurisdiction and do not pay taxes. Employment in the informal labour market was often described as being dependent on family and community connections.

Where formal employment does exist it is often concentrated within the public sector and governmental institutions. Employment of this type is considered hard to come by and can often be dependent on political affiliations and personal connections, individuals who are successful in their acquisition of such

a job are generally found to stay there for life or until they retire, which again mitigates the idea of career as a developmental journey characterised by occupational moves and progression. Even for those individuals who have successfully gained a job in the formal sector, particularly in the public sector, it may still be necessary to undertake some work in the informal sector to top up their wages, for example teachers offering private tuition after school.

Informants generally suggested that movement between the informal and formal economies was relatively rare. The formal economy typically demands different skills, knowledge and cultural capital, meaning that it is difficult for cross-sectoral progression to occur. If movement between the formal and informal economies does occur it will usually be at an unskilled level such as a street cleaner moving to become a cleaner within hospitality. The lack of social and occupational mobility also has a cooling effect on individuals' aspirations.

**Technical and vocational education (TVET).** In many countries, there are critical attitudes towards TVET, with it often being held in low regard and as a last option for many individuals. TVET is said to be taken up reluctantly and is seen as being a choice for people who cannot get into higher education. TVET provision in many LMICs is poorly resourced and lacks sufficient equipment, training and facilities. Despite this, specialists in some countries highlighted how the idea that TVET pathways can lead to interesting jobs with a positive economic return is gradually gaining ground. Some informants argued that in many cases TVET actually offered a more reliable pathway to a good career than higher education.

**Cultural issues**. Understanding the cultural context is an important aspect of understanding the operation of career in LMICs. Whilst cultural characteristics and traditions vary from region to region and country to country there was a strong consensus amongst our informants that culture strongly influences attitudes towards work and jobs and beliefs about what an individual can achieve. Family and community expectations are critical ways in which these cultural values are transmitted to individuals. In these contexts is it far more common than in high-income countries for people to understand their careers, not as a process of self-actualisation, but rather as linked to the journey of the family and the community in which they live. In many cultures this is accompanied by a strong deference to parents and elders and an allegiance to a network of kinship. Consequently, for the young people in these communities, life-altering decisions such as going to university or pursuing employment need to be negotiated with family and community stakeholders.

Attitudes to education in LMICs often vary widely, ranging from a lack of respect for formal education to ascribing very high value to education in the belief that it can deliver social mobility for the individual and the family. This is often associated with high levels of focus on a small number of elite professions (e.g. medicine, engineering and law). These kinds of narrow career aspirations and expectations contribute to misalignment between the education system and the skills that employers need.

In many countries, cultural attitudes towards gender differences were also raised as something which shapes people's career aspirations. Traditional gender roles are often policed by families and communities in ways that shape an individual's career development.

**Linguistic issues.** Language is also important to consider for many individuals looking for employment and wanting to pursue a career. The fact that many LMICs are multi-linguistic, with European languages (typically English, French or Spanish) often serving as the language of the elite, means that many people will need to develop their career in their second or third language, particularly if they are going to enter the formal economy. This means that multi-lingualism is often critical for career development.

**Access to career support.** The informants highlighted that most LMICs had very limited access to career guidance. If it exists at all careers guidance is often underdeveloped and under-resourced with limited acknowledgement of its importance to young people. Some countries are known to have attempted to develop career guidance systems, but this has often been based upon frameworks borrowed from high-income countries.

Career guidance and employability support is frequently provided by private organisations and may be only available to those who can pay. In countries where the job of career guidance practitioner exists, they often have limited training, skills, and knowledge.

Our informants spoke about some important innovations in career guidance support that have been developed in LMICs. In India, for example, there is a National Careers Service which was launched in 2015 and is operated by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. This is a free-to-access service that can be accessed online, via career centres and through employment exchanges. Additionally, in South Africa, the Good Work Foundation is a youth programme which runs a range of programmes from life skills for rural school children to 21st Century skills for people leaving high school. Despite this, access to career guidance in schools is something that is not easily accessible, with experts explaining that where career guidance in schools is emerging, time dedicated towards it is often limited and the policy framework is often open to interpretation.

In countries where public employment and careers guidance services do exist there are several issues which limit their effectiveness. Firstly, career guidance services are typically focused on the formal economy, which often excludes those who are pursuing their careers in the informal economy. Secondly, services are typically concentrated in urban settings, which results in low levels of engagement amongst the rural population. Thirdly, services often rely on soft funding, typically from international bodies and tied to particular groups and projects. This can result in a very fragile career guidance system which is liable to change in size and focus very quickly.

## Developing a list of career management skills

As part of the interviews with the 19 informants we asked them to identify career management skills that were relevant to and important in the low- and middle-income contexts in which they work. This list was then coded thematically into 30 skills, then sub-coded into nine key skills that fall under four categories: capabilities; contexts; opportunities; and strategies. Some skills that were suggested in this research were already found to exist in the current ILO core skills framework and so these have not been included in this CMS framework, but it is recommended that the ILO framework is read in parallel to these proposed skills needs.

**Capabilities.** The ability to know what you are capable of as an individual was highlighted as an important attribute to have to help you to develop a rewarding and successful career. Individuals who took part in this research expressed how skills such as self-knowledge and self-awareness were needed by individuals looking for employment and developing their careers. The CMS developed from this category is that of *'Building a self-concept'*. By this, it is meant the importance of knowing who we are as individuals, what our individual interests and beliefs are and specifically the importance of knowing our individual values and aspirations and having the capacity for reflection and introspection.

**Contexts.** Being able to recognise the context in which you live, work, and develop your career was the second area highlighted by the specialists as important to career management. For many LMICs, the family and community are very important culturally and the informants who we spoke to expressed how family and community can be influential on individuals and their life choices. The mirror image of this is that many families and communities are dependent on individuals to guarantee livelihood or fulfil certain key functions. Because of this, it can be difficult to view career choice in individualistic terms.

Many families and communities have expectations about the careers of the individuals within those families and communities. This can create tensions, with deviation from the planned career sometimes being seen as a betrayal or defiance. For individuals in these kinds of contexts, a key career management skill is the ability to manage family and community stakeholders and negotiate over different career possibilities. These issues are important for both lower income families where the expectation may be that individuals would work locally and bring earnings back to the family and community, as well as for

the 'elites' where the expectation may be that individuals pursue high status occupational paths such as doctor or engineer.

The skills devised as part of this category relate to the need to understand one's roles in *'being part of a family'* and *'being part of a community and culture'*. The need to acknowledge cultural contexts and backgrounds was noted throughout the conversations held and is a key skill that needs to be taken into consideration when developing a career. In one aspect this relates to the wider community, and the need to understand the community, what the community's needs are and the effect that pursuing work and a career away from the community could have. It also relates to the need to work with the family to inform them of the opportunities available that they may not be familiar with and to be able to manage these parental expectations.

**Opportunities.** This category addresses the opportunity structure within which individuals pursue their careers. Whilst the previous category discussed negotiating career and education with family this category emphasises the importance of individuals understanding what opportunities are available to them in terms of routes into work, labour market needs, labour rights and understanding employer needs. This may include an understanding of alternative forms of employment such as the importance of co-operatives in many countries, particularly in rural areas, in other conversations this was understood in terms of understanding the different needs for employment in the formal and informal labour market and being able to read and understand where the employment needs are and be able to react to this.

Furthermore, the need for individuals to understand the importance of lifelong learning and education is key, particularly as education is typically a precondition for participation in the formal economy. A positive orientation towards education and the willingness to stay in education for longer is argued to be key in supporting people to enter the formal economy. As well as the need to appreciate the importance of general education, interviewees expressed the importance of understanding the value of vocational education and training, even where this is not always understood to accord status. Our informants across a range of countries noted how TVET was often stigmatised and how this led to low levels of interest in this route. Despite these attitudes towards TVET it was also stated that individuals who had undertaken TVET were often more likely to gain employment than their peers who had been in higher education due to the saturation of the job market for those individuals with higher-level qualifications.

These general skills needs have been categorised under two key CMS, *'Being positive about learning'* and *'Being aware of opportunities and challenges'.*

**Strategies.** Being strategic in your career management was another area highlighted by the specialists. Strategy in the context of LMICs was discussed in a range of different ways. One element of this was the ability to make use of the individual agency that was available to develop your careers. This can present itself in a multitude of ways from entrepreneurialism to problem solving and being self-driven. Within this are also skills which link closely to cultural capital and understanding employer expectations, such as being punctual, motivated, diligent, saying the right things and wearing the appropriate clothes.

Other informants emphasised the importance of adaptability and the ability to transfer skills and learning across contexts. It was noted that these skills are particularly important in countries with high levels of precarity and instability. Understanding the importance of transferable skills also facilitates progression from the informal economy into the formal economy.

Another key skill that emerged during the research was the ability to use networks and relationships to build social capital and advance your career. Allied to this was the ability to work effectively with others and to build community and collective approaches to career development.

# ▶ Synthesising the framework and the production of the handbook

As can be seen by the discussion so far, the literature review and the expert interviews were well aligned. They both raised issues about the radically different nature of careering in LMICs in comparison to higher-income countries. They also both highlighted challenges in relation to the delivery of career guidance and other forms of career and employment support that were simultaneously linked to appropriate resourcing and culturally appropriate models of practice. However, there were also reasons for optimism that a CMS framework could make a useful contribution to the development of viable career guidance systems.

The framework identified by Hooley et al. (2013) which argues that CMS frameworks are made up of a list of learning areas, a learning model and a description of levels or contexts, was used as a way to provide the new framework with a structure. At the heart of this was the need to establish a list of skills or learning areas which summarise what individuals and groups need to know and be able to do in order to develop their careers. To create this list we had four main resources as follows.

- Existing CMS frameworks drawn from high-income countries as set out in Chapter 3.
- Emergent research on CMS, employability skills and wider skills needs in low- and middle-income countries, as set out in Chapter 4 (table 1).
- Stronger empirical evidence, largely drawn from psychology, on which factors contribute to career success, as set out in the final section of Chapter 4.
- Insights from the 19 international experts who were interviewed, which are set out in the last section of this Chapter.

These resources were drawn together to create a list of potential career management skills that could be included in the framework. The skills were coded thematically and analysed with reference to the wider contextual literature about careering in LMICs. The aim was to develop a new framework through an intercultural dialogue between the developed CMS framework of high-income countries and the culture and context of the LMICs (Silva et al., 2016). This was used to develop an initial version of the learning areas for consultation.

Similarly the learning model was developed through analysis of existing learning models and attention to key issues of context highlighted through the research for LMICs. Finally, it was decided that the framework needed to devote attention to the contexts within which career management skills were developed and five main contexts were identified based on our interviews.

- Schools
- Technical and vocational education (TVET) and apprenticeships
- Youth and employment programmes
- The informal economy
- The formal economy

The resulting career development framework was drafted in full and presented in a handbook designed to explain it for policymaker and practitioners. .

## ▶ Consulting on the framework

The final stage of the process of the development of the CD framework and handbook consisted of a consultation. The handbook was emailed to all 19 experts we had interviewed as well as three additional experts from the ILO employment service, and they were given three weeks to read, comment and feedback.

When seeking feedback we requested that the experts kept in mind that the handbook is designed primarily for low- and medium-income countries when answering the following questions;

- Is this useful for policy makers?
- Is this useful for practitioners?
- How can we improve the relevance of this document for policymakers and practitioners?
- Are there any groups that need to be addressed more specifically e.g. practitioners in rural areas?
- Do you have suggestions for amendments or additions?
- Can you suggest any resources that practitioners could use to help them to implement this kind of approach in low- and middle-income countries?
- Do you have any further thoughts on the handbook?

We received detailed feedback from six experts. These comments were then extracted and categorised into 'General issues', by chapters, 'Structure', and 'Other issues'. One comment that was shared by multiple experts was that there needed to be more recognition throughout the handbook of the diverse contexts in which the handbook could be used. This was important to demonstrate to policymakers, teachers, and careers guidance professionals that the handbook can be adapted and interpreted for different contexts and settings.

Providing more context for policymakers was also highlighted as needing more focus. This was particularly important for firstly demonstrating and clarifying the relevancy of the handbook and framework in a wider context, for example, the UN Sustainability Goals. And secondly adding more guidance for policymakers on how to use the framework, including the creation of specific case studies.

As well as increased clarity for policymakers, feedback was also provided on the need to acknowledge the variable practitioner skill and knowledge level across all regions that will be using the handbook. It was suggested that there needed to be more discussion on the practitioner competence and a recognition that in some areas this may be low. To rectify this, we made suggestions about how practitioners could improve their competence and added a range of resources which might be helpful.

The handbook and framework were iterated in response to all of these comments and a final version was produced.

# 5

# The career and development framework

In the previous chapter we explained the process through which the career and livelihood development framework was developed. In this chapter we present the final framework and set out the thinking that underpins it.

The career and development (CD) framework summarises what people need to learn to have a successful career, how this learning happens and how it is changed by diverse contexts such as life, learning and employment. It is an open access tool which is available for any individual, organisation, ministry or government to use for their own purposes.

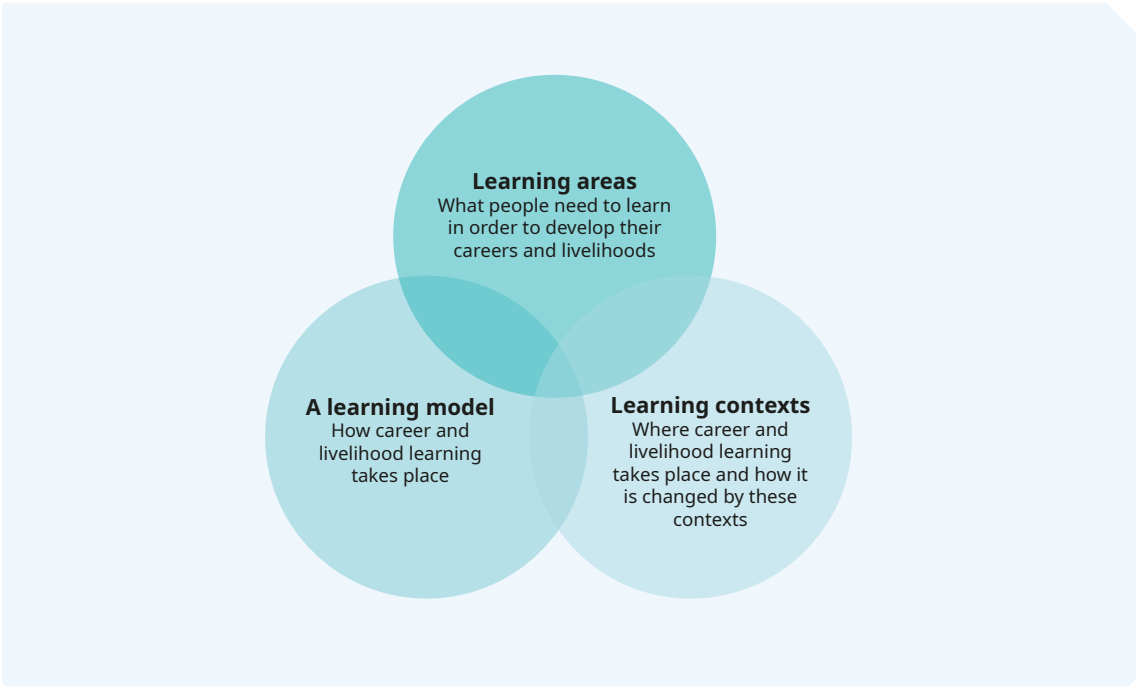
The framework is designed as a starting point for local and national approaches to career guidance and career development. It is not prescriptive, and it is recognised that each country has its own diverse contexts and so countries should feel free to adapt it to their local circumstances. It has been developed as a lifelong framework which summarises what people need to learn to have the best chance of building

a fulfilling, productive and successful career. We have particularly considered its value for young people in education and transitioning to the labour market but hope that it is useful for individuals at all life stages.

The CD framework provides a tool that can be used at a variety of levels. At the policy level it can be used to create consistency across different policy areas clarifying the aims of government funded or regulated interventions. In other words, it can be used to create a shared vision for career development across a whole country. But the framework is also valuable to programme designers and managers and to those who are delivering career development support as it provides clarity on what such support is designed to achieve.

The CD framework is comprised of three main elements which draw on Hooley et al.'s (2013) analysis of career management skills frameworks.

▶ **Figure 1.** Elements of the career and development framework




## ▶ The learning areas

The learning areas set out the key concepts that individuals need to engage with as they develop their careers. They answer the question, *what do people need to learn to have the best chance of building a fulfilling, productive and successful career?* The answer to this question is given as a series of areas where people can focus their learning, and educators, youth workers, employment professionals and others can help them to learn.

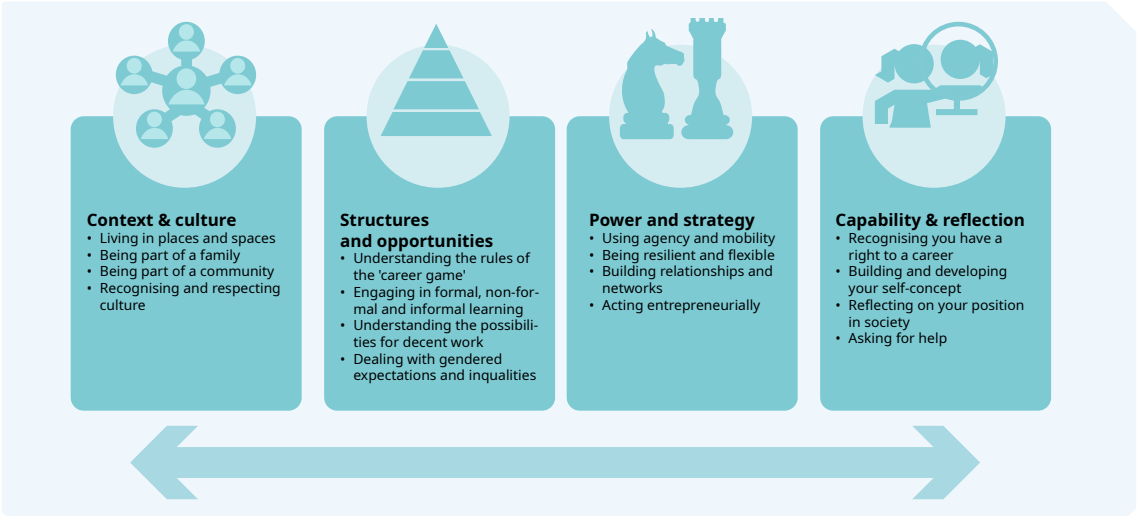
Within the learning areas we have set out 16 key *career management capabilities* (four in each of the four learning areas). The language of capabilities is derived in part from Sen (1999). The concept of 'capabilities' has been identified as theoretically useful for career development in the past by Robertson (2013). In this context it is useful because it allows us to conceive of the elements that enable people to be successful in their careers as broader and more continent than 'skills'. The language of skills is rooted

in positivistic human capital theory (Hooley, 2021a), in contrast, Sen's concept of capability is a socially situated capacity through which individuals can achieve functioning (the state of being and doing). The career management capabilities set out here should therefore not be understood solely as the learning of knowledge and technical capacity, but as something broader and more relational that encompasses attitudes, beliefs, relationships and the ability to access and utilise community capabilities.

The learning areas and career management capabilities have been developed, as discussed in the last chapter by synthesising the literature on career development in LMICs, with the input of key experts in the field and a careful process of consultation and reflection. The 16 different career management capabilities are likely to be developed alongside each other rather than one by one as there is considerable interaction between them.

Figure 2 sets out the learning areas on which career development in LMICs needs to focus. This is then followed by a detailed discussion of the capabilities within each of these learning areas.

▶ **Figure 2.** CD learning areas




## Context and culture

Developing your career in LMICs is about balancing the way in which the context and culture frame your possibilities for action with a belief that you can shape your own future. In such contexts it is rarely helpful to consider career in individualistic ways, rather it is valuable to consider how you are embedded into places, families, cultures and communities.

This learning area is made up of four capabilities. These capabilities are the key issues that people are likely to need to become familiar with, reflect on, and develop approaches to, as they develop their career.

- **Living in spaces and places.** Where we live frames the possibilities for our careers. The opportunities open to people in rural and urban places are different and individuals must understand where they live and work and consider the possibilities that this offers as well as the possibility of national and international mobility.

- **Being part of a family.** Family groups bring help, support, and resources to people's careers as well as responsibilities, assumptions and expectations. Recognising that effective household management can be an enabler of career is important as is an understanding that girls are often likely to disproportionately take on these household responsibilities. People need to consider how **they will adapt and manage** these different familial pressures as they develop their careers.

- **Being part of a community.** We live in communities bound together by shared interests, expectations, and mutual aid. In many cases the careers of individuals develop in a way that is intertwined with the prospering of their community. However, there are also tensions between individual aspirations and the expectations and requirements of communities. As people develop their careers they need to navigate these tensions and seek good outcomes for themselves and others.
- **Recognising and respecting culture.** Our lives and personalities are embedded in the cultures in which we are raised and where we live. Culture, including our religious and spiritual life, shapes our aspirations as well as our sense of what is possible and what is right and wrong. Our cultures are not fixed and unchanging, but they do not bend, at least not quickly, in response to the whims of individuals. People need to develop an awareness of their culture and the cultures of others who they meet in their careers. This awareness can support reflection on culture and shapes the way that they and others can develop their careers.

## Structures and opportunities

Access to opportunities is structured by the societies in which we live. It is important for people to recognise these structures and to consider how they will navigate them to generate opportunities for themselves and others in their family and community.

Whilst individuals must recognise that different workplaces might operate in different ways, particularly when considering urban/rural employment, the general capabilities that people need to work on in this area as they develop their careers are as follows.

- **Understanding the rules of the 'career game'.** We conduct our careers in an imperfect world. It is generally better to be able to see how things work than to pretend that the world is rational and perfect. People can advance their career more successfully when they understand where power lies, what assumptions underpin the working world and what is expected of them. Spending time building critical consciousness and an understanding of cultural capital is important for career learning.
- **Engaging in formal, non-formal and informal learning.** Formal education, non-formal learning (often within an organisational framework) and informal learning are important ways to advance people's careers. Clear career goals can help avoid drop out, increase retention and academic success. Recognising that career progression is often dependent on your ability to learn and develop is important, as is a recognition of the value that is accorded to literacy, numeracy, and the ability to speak national and international languages. Finally, successful careers are often developed through participation in the formal education systems and through the acquisition of recognised qualifications and so people need to learn how to participate in this system and what the rewards of doing so are.
- **Understanding the possibilities for decent work and entrepreneurship.** In LMICs, careers are built in both the informal and formal economies, with some people operating between the two. Successful careers are based on a sound understanding of what the labour market needs, how to access these opportunities and which ones are more likely to lead towards decent and sustainable work. This includes the ability to research the labour market and manage transitions, but also an understanding of legal rights and responsibilities as well as of the functioning of the informal labour market.
- **Dealing with gendered expectations and inequalities.** Gender is an incredibly important factor that structures participation in education and employment in many LMICs. Gender relations are embedded in culture, society and in labour market segregation and employment relations. Both women and men need to be able to understand these structures and develop strategies to navigate and challenge them where they believe it is right to do so.

## Power and strategy

Careering is a process of active engagement with the world. Individuals and groups have the capacity to change their lives and influence organisations and societies, but such processes rely on the development of capacities to enact change. In low- and middle-incomes the ability to enact change is often highly constrained and so people often also need to be resilient and flexible. This ability to combine a variety of personal and collective strategies to develop your career is central to effective career and livelihood development.

The capabilities that people need to work on in this area as they develop their careers are as follows.

- **Exercising agency and mobility. T**he term 'agency' refers to the recognition that individuals can influence and have control over their actions, ultimately it describes the power an individual has over their own life. All career management takes place within boundaries, structures and limits, but people have agency. They can change things, decide how to react to them and move towards or away from them. It is important that people recognise this agency and take advantage of it to advance their situation. For many this will require the development of their confidence as they seek to challenge and change their lives and the structures around them. This may include developing people's capacity to make decisions, to transition to new roles and opportunities and to act individually and collectively to change their circumstances. It may also include considering different kinds of mobility including occupational and sectoral mobility, moving between the formal and informal economy and social and geographical mobility.

- **Being resilient and flexible.** Careers are pursued within social and organisational structures which can often be unfair, inefficient, and sub-optimal. People need to be resilient in the face of these challenges and develop a capacity to be flexible and creative in response to them. Both resilience and flexibility should be understood as both psychological and social processes. So, people may be able to exhibit resilience through their own psychological capital or by relying on their family and community for help and support. Similarly, they can exhibit flexibility through creativity and entrepreneurial thinking or through the strengthening of networks of mutual aid and reciprocity. Such resilience and flexibility needs to be understood as part of a social contract between individuals, organisations and governments in which all parties recognise the value in negotiation and adaption rather than as a way to responsibilise individuals to bear the brunt of all social and economic change.

- **Building relationships and networks.** Who you know matters for your career in all contexts, but this is even more important in countries with large informal labour markets. Developing your career involves maintaining good relationships with your family, community, work colleagues, professional network, and other sources of reciprocal support. In some cases, family can be a good source of opportunity and employment, and you may want to work with others through organisations and social movements to achieve change and improve the context for everyone's career development. This capability may also include the ability to manage networks of kinship and patronage to support you to find and advance in work and the ability to network with others and build social capital that can support the engagement with new opportunities.

- **Acting entrepreneurially.** Low- and middle-income countries often have less established employment structures and bureaucracies. Developing a career in this kind of context requires people to be entrepreneurial and willing to create, adapt and develop opportunities to their purpose. This may include engaging with self-employment, starting enterprises, or building social enterprises as part of a community.

## Capability and reflection

People's self-concept, self-belief, aspirations, and capabilities lie at the heart of their career journey. While the other three learning areas are focused on understanding and acting on the outside world, the final area encourages people to spend time thinking about and developing themselves.

The capabilities that people need to work on in this area as they develop their careers are as follows.

- **Recognising you have a right to a career.** Most people do not view a career as something that they have or deserve. As they develop their understanding, this recognition will empower them, increase their self-worth, and provide them with a way of understanding and interacting with the world.
- **Building and developing your self-concept.** A clear understanding of who you are, your strengths, capabilities, wants, and needs is critical to understanding how you want to develop your career. Such a self-concept exists within a social context, with people needing to develop, combine and recombine social roles such as student, worker, provider, dependent, child, brother/sister, cousin, parent, and community member as they develop their career.
- **Reflecting on your position within society.** People need to understand where they are within the society in which they live and consider where they want to go. Understanding your position relative to others, systems and context provides insights that can support the development of your career. Such a recognition includes recognising social, economic, ethnic, and linguistic hierarchies and considering what can be done about them both individually and collectively. It is also about recognising the power that you have, and the power that others have, and thinking about this facilitates or obstructs you and others' abilities to develop livelihood and career.
- **Asking for help.** We need to be willing to ask others for help, know our limits and draw on the strengths of others. Where it is possible this is also about making use of formal and informal careers and employment services, including public provision, community provision and private services, to support your career building.

# ▶ Learning model: the career learning spiral

The learning areas describe what people need to learn to build a successful career. However, it is important to think about how this learning takes place. Career learning is unlikely to be successful if people are expected to learn information about each of the areas by rote. Rather career learning has to be understood as an active process by which learners engage with their world, are supported through learning materials, and reflect on themselves. In undertaking this process people are unlikely to engage with each area or capability in turn, but rather to be engaged in a process of developing several of them simultaneously.

The learning model adopted in this framework draws heavily on the career development learning spiral set out by Hooley (2021b). This approach to learning draws variously on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model, Bruner's conception of the spiral curriculum (1977) and Law's career learning theory (1999). But this has been enriched and made more contextually situated in response to the heightened importance of community, culture and context for career learning in low- and middle-income countries. As such it drew on further theoretical resources including Arulmani (2011), Law (1981), McIlveen (2012), Sen (1999) and Thomsen, (2017).

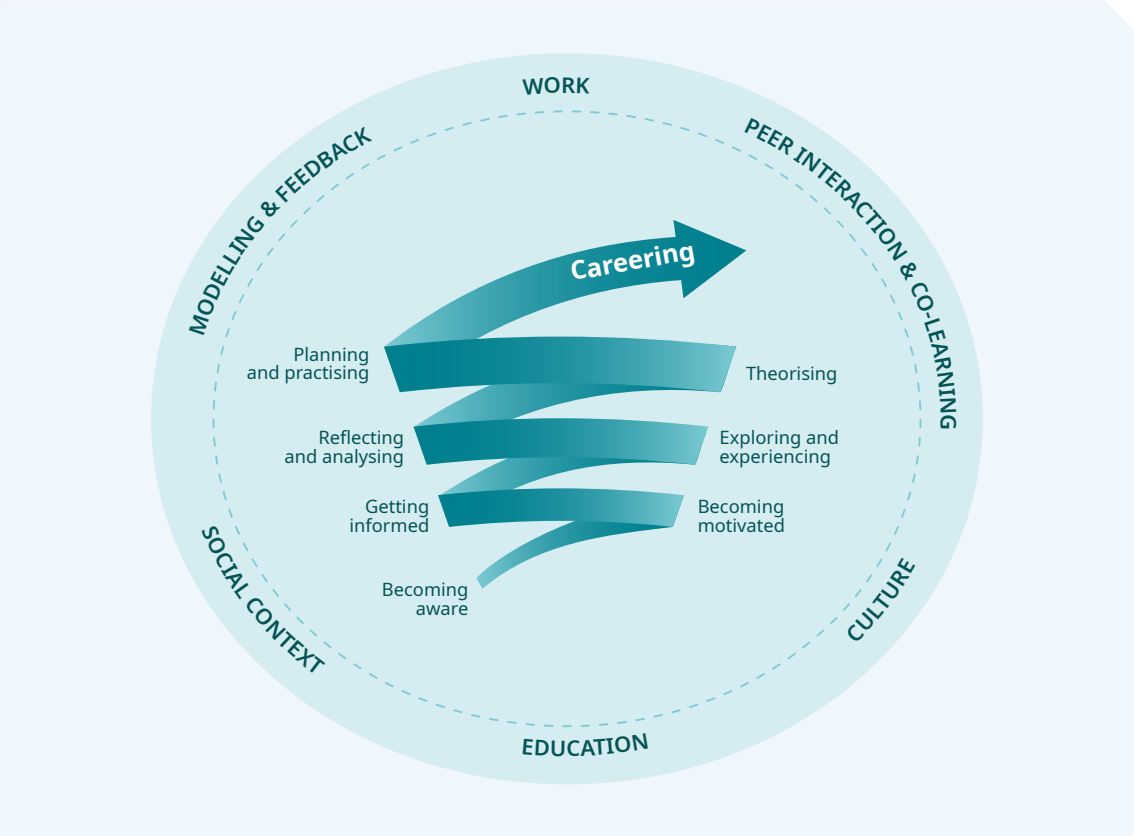
The proposed career learning model views career development as a continuous process that begins early in life, gathers pace at school and work and then continues throughout life. Early on young people are forming an awareness of the importance of building a life project, but how this project is built is likely to depend on their experience of education and work. As they are gradually able to exercise more agency it becomes increasingly possible to move from learning about career, to managing career.

Career learning cannot be confined to curriculum or formal learning experiences, although it can be stimulated and scaffolded by these. We are learning about our careers all the time through encountering information, having experiences, reflecting on what has happened and trying new ideas and approaches.

The career learning spiral underpins the acquisition of the learning themes outlined in the previous section. The metaphor of the spiral recognises that learning about careers and livelihood is an iterative process in which learners often return to a more basic understanding as the context changes. In this way, a learner may have developed all the knowledge and skills that they need to manage a transition from school to work, but when they begin to consider a transition from the informal economy to the formal economy much of their competence in transition has to be relearnt. However, every time we move around the spiral we also learn new things that can be reused later in life.

The career learning spiral is therefore simultaneously cyclical and progressive and recognises that learners will frequently need to engage with concepts multiple times, but also that their competence steadily grows as they do this.

▶ **Figure 3.** The career learning spiral



Learning takes place in a social context. It is framed and enabled by the following elements.

- **Work** provides motivation and a key context for career learning.
- **Education** can purposefully enable career learning through careers education as well as providing an important context for informal career learning.
- **Social context** shapes what people need to learn as well as the resources and opportunities that they have for career learning.
- **Culture** shapes individuals' underlying worldview and frames the way that they encounter new information and experiences.
- **Modelling and feedback** describes the input that people get into their career learning from others, both in terms of observing how others manage their careers and receiving feedback on their own careers and career management. In many cases this is about actively seeking out others and drawing on their experience to develop your own capabilities.
- **Peer interaction and co-learning** describes the way that people learn alongside others, receiving ideas and input and engaging in forms of group and collective co-learning.

In this model learners are:

- **Becoming aware** of their own lives in a holistic way. They become aware that they are developing their pathway through life, learning and work, and that it is important to think ahead about career and life decisions.
- **Becoming motivated** to engage in career learning and recognise its importance for developing the kind of career pathway that they want.
- **Getting informed** about what a career is, about different career and life paths, possibilities, and opportunities.
- **Exploring** different career and life possibilities.
- **Reflecting on and analysing** what they have learned and what it means to them and to others.
- **Theorising** how what they have learned applies it to their own lives and their view of society.
- **Planning and practising** the careers and lives they want and what they will need to achieve them.
- **Careering** through their lives by using what they have learned to develop and apply it in their own careers.

## ▶ The learning contexts

Both what we learn (the learning areas) and how we learn (the learning model) are shaped by the context within which we learn. The framework for career learning is designed to support and scaffold learning within a wide range of contexts in which people may be pursuing their careers in LMICs.

In chapter 2 we argued that career guidance services in LMICs are often very different from those that can be found in high-income countries. Career guidance takes place in different venues, is funded and organised and different ways and uses different approaches to delivery and, ideally different kinds of

theory. We argue that there are five main contexts within which career guidance can be developed within low- and medium-income countries as follows.

- Schools
- Technical and vocational education (TVET) and apprenticeships
- Youth and employment programmes
- The informal economy
- The formal economy

These are not necessarily the only contexts within which career learning might take place, but they are important ones to focus on. For example, there is also a growing range of possibilities to use the framework digitally and this could potentially be viewed as a context in its own right. But, in most cases these, and other spaces for the development of career management skills will interact with the five contexts outlined above.

To illustrate this we will discuss each of these contexts and then briefly illustrate them with examples drawn from Latin America. The organisation and funding of these kinds of programmes is worthy of note, with career and livelihood programmes in LMICs typically drawing on a variety of funds and approaches to delivery including public budgets, charity funding, funding from international organisations, private investments managed by NGOs or public authorities, and public-private partnerships.

## Schools

Schools are important contexts for career learning. Young people are already in schools learning about life and the world around them. If a programme of career education can be introduced into the curriculum it allows young people to be purposefully presented with information and experiences to develop their career thinking.

The learning areas set out in the framework provide a detailed articulation of what a careers education should cover. They can be used to form a specific careers curriculum or to inform and enrich the wider school curriculum for example by bringing content related to scientific careers into science lessons.

An example of the development of career learning in this context can be found in the career education practice in secondary schools in Brazil. Some Brazilian public schools offer full-time education, in which students have support for the development of their career management skills through two curricular subjects: world of work and life project, with a weekly workload of 2 hours during the three years of secondary school (Limonta, 2013). The former fulfils the role of gradually introducing students to the world of work and its vicissitudes, and the latter demands the construction of a life project. Both subjects seek to engage students with the world of work and develop their career management skills and capacity to develop their own life project. This curriculum 'is historically located and determined by a multiplicity of interests (economic, social, political, cultural) in one constant and complex process of inclusion, revision, and withdrawal of knowledge' (p. 111).

Another example of a programme operating primarily within the education system is the Youth and Children's Orchestras Program in Argentina. This programme has educational (musical training), social (promoting citizenship), and cultural (expanding access to cultural goods and services) objectives (Valenzuela et al. 2022). Participants are supported in developing their career management skills throughout all of the learning experiences, through a nonformal educational intervention that facilitates students' career construction. The programme is publicly funded, with career development objectives embedded into wider educational aims for the programme.

## Technical and vocational education (TVET) and apprenticeships

Technical and vocational education (TVET) and apprenticeships offer a strong context for career learning as learners may already be engaged in career-relevant learning, and have access to work relevant experiences and contacts in the world of work. The learning areas can be used as part of the curriculum to complement technical skills acquisition. Some of this will be about learning about the nature of the vocation that students are entering and thinking about how it connects to the wider labour market and society, but students should also be encouraged to think about their career beyond their immediate technical training.

The approach set out in the framework is designed to foster a broad careers curriculum, which moves people beyond a consideration of occupational selection to a more expansive set of ideas about what career is. In other words, it is not just about choosing a career, but also thinking about how you can manage and conduct that career in ways that fit with your ethics and help you to achieve the goals that you are aiming for. In the context of vocational learning and apprenticeships this fits closely with wider discussions about professional practice and professional ethics as well as with a consideration of the nature of the vocational labour market.

An example of the development of career learning within apprenticeship programmes can be found in Brazil where one of the means of preparing young people between 14 and 24 years of age for entering the world of work is through a professional apprenticeship program. This program offers theoretical and technical content besides enabling activities that develop skills focused on interpersonal relations and conflict resolution. To support the career development of the apprentices, a career management skills module was inserted into the programme which focused on the development of socio-emotional skills and career adaptability (Souza, 2019). That is a federal government institutional program coordinated by the Ministry of Education and carried out by NGOs. Through a public-private partnership, the funding is public and private entities implement the program (Souza, 2019). On the one hand, the main advantage of this type of funding is the investment of private capital to manage and conduct the programme with greater fluidity of administrative processes and dynamic decisions. However, on the other hand, the public-private partnership requires actions of planning, control, and supervision of the programme that can bring important obstacles in terms of its elaboration and operationalisation, mainly due to potential diverse interests between the public and private spheres, just like the alternative described above. And the third way is through public-private partnerships for the implementation of CMS Development programmes.

## Youth, employment and enterprise programmes

Outside of the formal education system it is still important for work and career development interventions to have clear outcomes that guide their design. For young people, especially those who have not found work, a wide range of programmes exist to reengage them. These activities may include a range of informal learning, work tasters and other experiences and activities. The CD framework can help youth workers to design programmes, sequence activities and ensure that they are related to meaningful career learning outcomes.

Within public and private employment services a range of activities exist to help people to prepare themselves for work, or to make transitions from one kind of employment to another. The framework can be used as a checklist to help assess need and focus support, or as a curriculum for training programmes for jobseekers.

An example of career learning in Latin America and the Caribbean is the ENTRA 21 programme. This programme was created by a joint action between the International Youth Foundation, the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank, and the United States Agency for

International Development (USAID), involving 18 Latin American countries (Raso-Delgue, 2011). It offers training to young people in jobs in demand in the new economy in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in the information technology (IT) area. This training develops skills needed for working with IT, and career management and employability skills. The programme is based on alliances with governments, companies, and local organisations to meet the demands of the labour market in the region. The programme are a good example of the kind of career guidance projects that are delivered in many LMICs, funded by international agencies and involving a variety of stakeholders outside of the education system including community tutoring programmes, labour intermediation agencies, social protection support services, youth development offices, trade union skilling programmes, and citizen training courses organised by social movements.

A different example of a youth focused employment programme can be seen in social entrepreneurship programmes (Colombia and Costa Rica). These programmes supported young people to create businesses within their home communities which can generate a financial, social, and educational return for the community. Career management skills development activities were part of the programme and helped with the building of social entrepreneurship in poor communities in Costa Rica (Prado et al., 2022) and Colombia (Coley, 2019). The main advantage is bureaucratic agility and decision-making. And the main obstacles are the focus of the programs on the interests of the sponsors who propose strategies based more on expanding the productive capacity of young people for the business world than on social development itself. The funding for these initiatives was drawn from private and charitable funding and channelled through local NGOs.

## ▶ The informal economy

The informal economy is the context for many, and in some countries, most, people's careers. The framework can support people in the informal economy to reflect on their experience and build their capability as they develop their careers either within the loose structures of the informal economy or seek to progress into the formal economy.

One of the challenges for those working in the informal economy is that there are rarely structures which support this process of reflection and learning. Informal businesses do not typically have human resource professionals and line management processes are likely to be more ad hoc and less focused on the development of individuals. Additionally, in the informal economy there needs to be a recognition of prior learning, acknowledging what young people already know through their school attendance, and this can be key in bridging the gap to formalisation. Despite this the CD framework can still offer a tool for those working in the informal economy and for those working with the informal economy to support career and livelihood development and provide outreach to informal workers with career guidance support.

An example of a career and livelihood intervention targeting workers in the informal economy can be seen in a partnership between the Argentinian Ministry of Education and a community ration station serving the peripheral communities of Buenos Aires. The practitioners involved in the programme had a career education model with some standards and tools to develop career management skills; however, they decided to hold conversations with community leaders to identify the needs of young people in that community and identify existing resources. From this community immersion, they got to know the communitarian radio station that most young people listened to and planned a career education programme using this resource. There was no previous knowledge about what career education looks like amongst the community and so the community radio station helped to build dialogue with young people and clarify the meaning of career development support. This was achieved through a weekly 30-minute programme in which they would clarify doubts about work and careers, and then, based on these

doubts, create a programme to develop career management skills for young people who were mostly working in the informal economy (Rascován, 2017).

Another example is an entrepreneurial action developed in Chile. This programme aims to promote micro-enterprises, i.e., to develop self-employment opportunities for unemployed young people, supporting them to overcome poverty through training for low-income entrepreneurs. The program has three stages: 'a) training in business problems and the preparation of a business plan; b) technical support for an average period of four months; c) financing of projects with their resources or through alliances with micro-credit organizations' (Raso-Delgue, 2011, p.223). In these stages, disadvantaged young people are assisted by other young professionals and university students, who conduct the follow-up as a form of volunteering. As a complement, they have a learning space for developing career management skills.

## ▶ The formal economy

The formal economy is defined by its structures and processes. The capabilities outlined in the CD framework can help people to understand these structures and navigate them more successfully.

Human resource professionals within the formal economy can utilise the career development framework to shape organisational learning activities, promotion and progression frameworks and other instruments which recognise and support development.

An example of a career and livelihood intervention within the formal economy can be found in a career education in an industrial trade union programme in Brazil. Through a partnership with a trade union, a career education module was included in the training programme offered to its young employees to develop career management skills for work in the automotive industry. Drawing on established career education approaches in schools, a structured programme of sequenced activities was built, which sought gradually to assist in two ways. Firstly, by aiming at vocational and personal development through mobilising affective, cognitive, and experiential resources inherent in choosing and planning the working future. And second, by offering occupational information to be conducted by the educators of the qualification course themselves (Ribeiro 2010).

# 6

# Next steps: moving to implementation

To gain any benefits from the career and livelihood development framework attention needs to be given to implementation. Hooley et al. (2013) argue that there are four main elements that contribute to the successful implementation of career management skills frameworks.

- **Policy.** Government policy, funding and wide-ranging political implementation is critical in setting the context within which a CD framework should be implemented. If government sets out the framework and uses it to organise and co-ordinate all activities that relate to career and livelihood development, there is a much higher chance of the framework being adopted by relevant stakeholders.
- **Resources.** The provision of resources for programmes and practitioners makes it far easier to use. This could include a process of mapping existing resources to the framework or creating new resources designed to support the implementation of everything from the whole framework to a single capability. The document *Using the career planning framework to support work experience* which is published alongside this handbook provides an example of resources which can be used to help develop work experience programmes within different educational settings.

- **Service delivery approach.** It is important to consider how the framework should be delivered. This is usually about considering how it might fit into existing practices and how practitioners might work with it. The CD framework is designed to build on and support existing career guidance methodologies, tools and approaches. Creating a service delivery approach may include ideas like embedding the framework within a school curriculum or clarifying when public employment services should make use of the framework. The development of a service delivery approach is likely to include both service/programme designed considerations such as the allocation of time and resources and staff training.
- **Community of practice.** Finally, it is important for the implementation of the framework to be supported through a community of practice. This is about bringing together key stakeholders and users of the framework and giving them an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with the framework.

# ▶ How different users can implement the framework

The process of implementation will be different for different kinds of users. In all cases it is important to be familiar with the framework and to consider what objectives you are using it for. In this section we explore how different kinds of users might implement the framework

## Governments and policymakers

The CD framework can be used as an underpinning document to create coherence in the education and employment system. By specifying a consistent set of aims that different government policies, programmes and services are designed to bring about, the CLD framework can help governments to align the activities of different delivery areas.

The CD framework can also be used by ministries in a more focused way as part of the development of a particular policy, by specifying the detailed outcomes that government is funding activity to achieve. Once defined these can be built into funding agreements, inspection regimes and performance criteria and other forms of delivery specification and monitored against.

In some cases, the CD framework might be 'owned' and operated by a national agency with responsibility for quality or delivery in a particular area e.g. the public employment service or schools. In such cases the framework can act as a core document against which the agency delivers and all stakeholders are brought into alignment around common goals. One of the challenges of such arrangements is avoiding the siloing of the CD framework to a particular sector or context. Ideally, it serves as a cross-sectoral document which supports policy alignment across government.

## Schools and teachers

The framework provides a basis for a career education curriculum as it describes the career development learning areas that such a curriculum should cover and the outcomes that should be observable at the end of the programme.

One option is for schools to develop a standalone career education subject in which the CD framework serves as a complete curriculum. Alternatively, the learning outcomes in the CD framework could be mapped onto the school's existing curriculum to enable careers content to inform the whole curriculum.

## Vocational institutes and apprenticeships

Students who are engaged in vocational education or apprenticeships are already engaged in an active form of career development. Typically, this will be supported by a framework or curriculum which details the occupational knowledge and skills that they need to develop. In some cases, this will be supplemented by learning focused on developing professionals' skills, attributes and behaviours that are not directly linked to the vocational competency e.g., interpersonal skills or starting your own business. Such skills, as well as more technical vocational skills are often closely linked to the kind of career and livelihood development skills highlighted in the framework.

Where vocational institutes and apprenticeship providers are keen to move from preparing students for their first job, to preparing them for a lifetime career, the CD framework provides an ideal tool. The provider can use it to map their curriculum, identifying the CD capabilities that are already being developed through their programme and then actively strengthening these areas with new learning activities.

## Youth and employment programmes

Youth and employment programmes can use the CLD framework to help design employability and career transition programmes. The identification of clear outcomes can clarify the purpose of programmes and support programme developers to build effective programmes. It is important to remember that not all programmes necessarily need to address all the capabilities.

The framework may also be used to guide delivery activities by giving practitioners learning outcomes and focus areas that they can raise with clients when they are working with the programme. This has the effect of increasing the coherence of what is delivered and providing a consistent method of delivery.

## Informal economy

Workers in the informal economy are often quite disconnected from structures which can support them to develop their careers and livelihoods. The CD framework is available to individual workers to support them in their reflection on their careers and to informal employers who want to improve the opportunities of their workers, perhaps as part of an attempt to improve retention and productivity.

More usually the CD framework might be deployed as part of formalisation initiatives working with the informal economy. This might include the formalisation of informal apprenticeships, initiatives by trade unions to negotiate improvements in the conditions of workers or actions by governments or non-governmental bodies to draw informal workers and employees into more formalised approaches to employment. In such cases the CD framework provides a normative instrument which emphasises the relevance of things like formal training, continuity of employment, decent work, progression and the value of autonomy and the rights of individuals.

## Formal economy

Many companies, particularly those in the formal economy, provide planned programmes of learning and development for their employees. The frameworks for these programmes often describe the skills that individuals need to progress within the organisation. The ability of employees to develop their own careers should be recognised as an important part of what makes for a high performing employee. Organisations can use the CD framework to recognise the importance of career and livelihood development as part of their approach to training and development.

Employers may also want to use the framework to support the construction of job descriptions (for example using terminology from the framework) and to inform any educational or community outreach that they do.

## Career guidance and development programmes

Career guidance remains emergent in many LMICs. However, where such services exist the CD framework provides an ideal tool for them.

Career counselling and coaching professionals can use the framework to help structure their interviews and other interventions and to identify areas for development and help clients to reflect on what they could do to move forwards. The CD framework should align well with career guidance professionals' existing practices and provide them with an additional tool which can enhance their practice and connect it to wider career development work informed by the CD framework.

The CD framework can also be used to provide a structure for group based career development interventions and for digital career learning, support tools and content.

## The guide to work experience

A guide to work experience was designed to introduce the idea of work experience to practitioners working in schools and technical and vocational education and training settings in LMICs. The guide introduces the concept of work experience and insights into how this idea can be introduced in the education system and is one example of a resource that can be used to deliver the CD framework. The guide makes use of the ILO's career development framework to structure and support the learning that is needed around work experience. The guide is aimed at practitioners, teachers and programme management and is designed to be highly practical, providing an understanding of work experience, giving suggestions for designing work experience programmes, explaining how to engage with employers, and helping practitioners to manage and organise work experience programmes. The guide also provides a section that can be provided to employers to help them understand the concept of work experience, what they can and cannot do and how to facilitate placements.

A key part of the guide Is the resource section which provides 11 resources/documents that can be used and adapted by practitioners, students, and employers as part of a work experience programme, from its initial organisation, to during the placement, and after the placement where students, practitioners and employers can reflect on the programme.

# ▶ Assessing and evaluating career programmes

Clarifying the learning outcomes of career development programmes helps us to be more certain about the impact of these programmes. If we know what outcomes we want to result from a career development programme it is easier to see whether these outcomes have been achieved.

This can be useful in developing forms of assessment as part of the delivery of career development interventions and programmes. You can use the detailed career development learning outcomes set out at the end of this handbook to develop an assessment framework for a career education programme or intervention. You will need to decide what you want a learner to be able to demonstrate that they know or can do at the end of the programme and think about how you are going to measure this. Building assessment into your career development programme can clarify the aims of your programme, motivate your learners, help individuals to judge their progress and provide insights into how effective your programme is.

The identification of clearly acknowledged learning outcomes can also provide a basis for evaluating your career development programme. By adopting the CD framework you are clarifying what you are trying to achieve through your programme. These outcomes can then be used as the basis for an evaluation of the programme's effectiveness.

# ▶ The importance of adaption

The CD framework has been carefully developed for low- and middle-income countries. It is different from any comparable framework that exists in high-income countries. However, it is important to acknowledge that LMICs describe a vast array of different kinds of contexts, cultures, political and economic environments. Given this, it is important to discuss how the framework can be adapted to local needs. In essence, this is describing the process of creating a local CD framework, in which the ILO framework serves as the starting point.

The framework is designed to be adapted, it is modular and made up of a range of different elements which can be changed and developed. However, it is also coherent so before you begin the process of changing and adapting it, it is important to do some research and to build a clear case for what needs to be changed and why.

## Developing the evidence for adaption

A case for changing and adapting the framework should be grounded in critique and feedback of the existing framework. At its most basic level this is about showing the framework to a range of stakeholders and gathering their feedback on what they like, do not like and might want to change. Such feedback might take the form of a series of conversations, a survey or a workshop to understand if the framework can be used in all contexts, whether it can be used by both practitioners and policy makers and whether it is relevant for the contexts that the users are working in. You might also want to review existing literature on career and career development in your country and consider how that might shape the framework.

Most importantly you should consider how the framework fits into relevant local structures e.g. the school curriculum or common practices in youth work, employment support or human resource management. We know that frameworks tend to be more effective when they align well with local understandings, structures, and realities.

## Translating and aligning concepts

The first level of adaption is translating the framework into local languages and carefully addressing the alignment of different linguistic concepts at this point. The strongly conceptual nature of the CD framework means that translation has to be done carefully by someone who understands the issues rather than just as a technical translation process.

Making the framework available in appropriate local languages is important as it allows actors at a range of different levels to engage with it. This ultimately supports the aim of creating a coherent and integrated career development system in which everyone is seeking to bring about the same aims.

## Adapting the learning areas

The learning areas are made up of 16 capabilities organised into four areas. It is very easy to add, remove and change the capabilities. If the capabilities or the way that they are expressed do not fit with local realities, they can be adapted. Similarly, if they have missed key concepts these can be added.

In the process of adaption, it is important to consider the following issues.

- There should be a clear rationale for any changes.
- Implications and overlaps with other capabilities should be considered and minimised.

- Care should be taken to ensure that any new or adapted capabilities are placed in the right learning area.

Normally it should be possible to adapt the learning areas at the level of the capabilities, rather than changing whole learning areas. The areas of Context and culture; Structures and opportunities; Power and strategy; and Capabilities and reflection, should not normally need to be changed, although it may be appropriate to rename them in ways that connect with local realities. However, as with the capabilities it is possible to change the learning areas, add new areas or remove ones which are not meaningful.

If users decide to adapt the learning areas, it is important to retain some elements which stretch people and encourage them to think about career and career development in new ways.

## Adapting the learning model

It is less likely that users will want to adapt the learning model than the learning areas, but this is also possible. The learning model has been developed as a synthesis of a range of different career learning models and so may prove more difficult to edit. Of course, users are free to make tweaks and changes.

A more likely approach to adapting the learning model is to borrow a learning model that is commonly used within your context. This may be something that is built into educational curricula and which can be borrowed and adapted to focus on career learning. Again, this is not always a straightforward process and is likely to require engagement from experienced educationalists to make it work in a meaningful way.

## Adapting the learning contexts

Users are very likely to want to adapt the learning contexts that are set out in the handbook. This might be about providing more detail on an existing context e.g. breaking down schools into primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, or about adding new contexts e.g. migrant support programmes or learning and development within the armed forces.

The detailed learning outcomes set out at the end of the CD handbook provide insights into how to do this. In essence it is about taking the generic capabilities and placing them in a series of different contexts. As you do this it is important to consider the following issues.

- What are the particular challenges and opportunities of career learning in this environment?
- What pre-existing forms of career learning, or associated activities, take place in this context and how can they be aligned with the capabilities?

# Conclusions

This paper has provided an explanation of the research and development process which has been followed to create the ILO's career development framework. Through a detailed literature review and empirical research we have demonstrated the importance of career development in low- and middle-income countries and made the argument that career guidance and a career management skills framework can be useful tools for supporting the careers of people in such countries.

Low- and middle-income countries have a unique set of circumstances which require career development to be culturally and contextually sensitive. The CD framework has been embedded in the low- and middle-income country context and designed to be further adaptable in response to local needs. It is important that the development of career guidance systems in low- and middle-income countries are not left to rely on resources and approaches from high-income countries where attitudes, experiences, and cultures are significantly different.

Following the launch of the framework it is important to continue to develop, extend and implement the framework across a range of different countries. This paper highlights the emergent nature of research on careers in low- and middle-income countries, it is hoped that the launch of this framework can help to further stimulate and develop the evidence base in this area. Perhaps even more important to the success of the CD framework is the need for countries to develop resources, local curricula, implementation strategies and other approaches to developing, adapting and implementing the framework. In such circumstances the ILO has a key role in building a global community of practice amongst the diverse users of its framework.

This project is an attempt to balance the provision of useful global resources, with a recognition of the importance of local cultures and contexts. It is highly recommended, and this is reiterated throughout the handbook, that the countries using the framework should treat the framework as a flexible tool that can be used in whatever way that makes sense to them. This may mean concentrating on certain parts of the framework which are more suitable to their contexts rather than attempting to tackle and implement the framework as a whole or adapting the framework to local realities and blending it with existing tools and approaches. It is hoped that the creation of the framework will support and promote the growth of career and livelihood development policies and practices across low- and middle-income countries.

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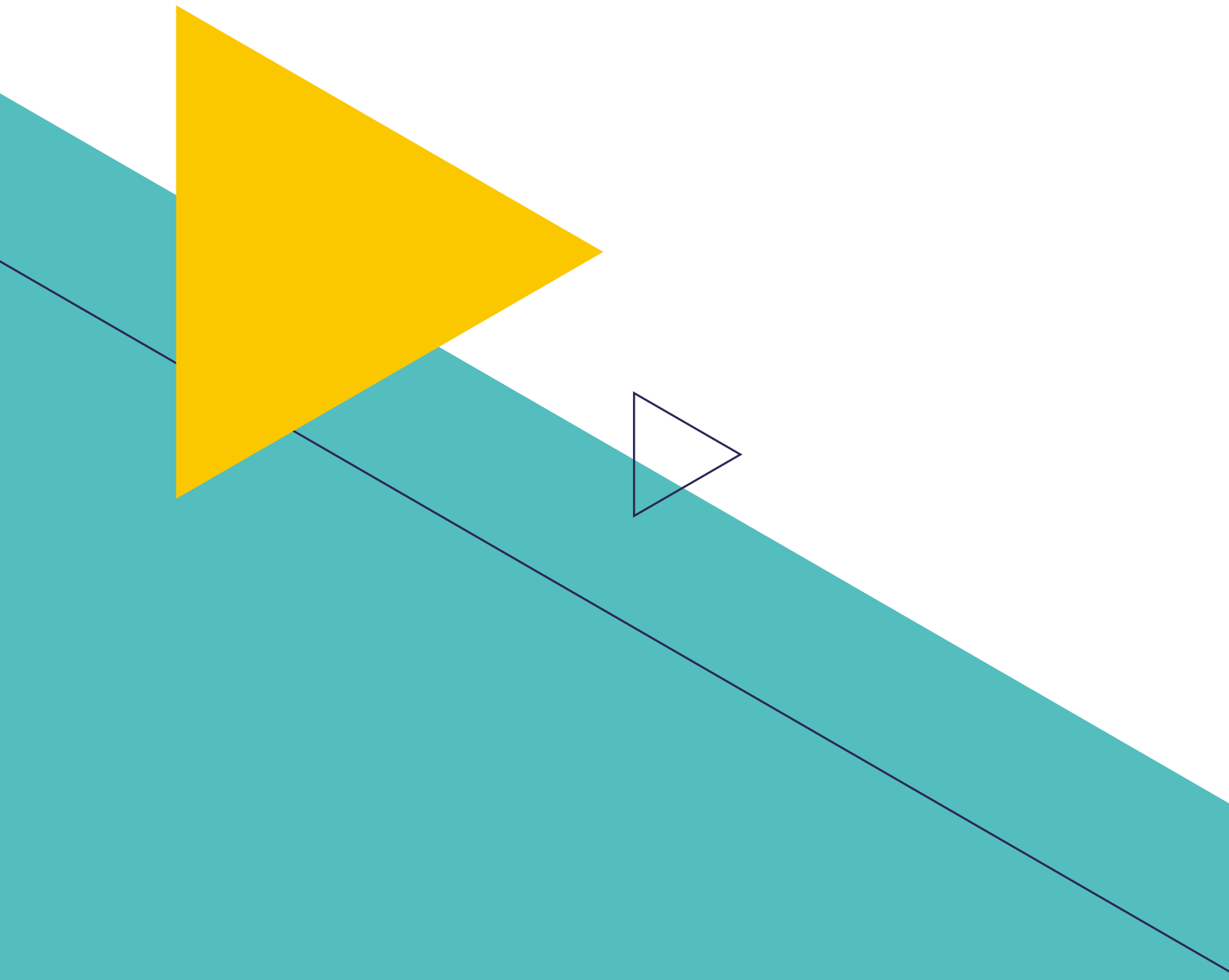

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