

# The Professionalization of Career Development in Canada in the 21st Century

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LYNNE BEZANSON  
SAREENA HOPKINS  
ELAINE O'REILLY  
Canadian Career Development Foundation

## **PRE-READING QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by the career development sector in Canada?
2. What is career development?
3. Why is it important for career development practitioners to belong to professional associations? To become certified?

## **Introduction and Learning Objectives**

Career development practitioners must respond to the ever-changing career needs of individuals and, at the same time, handle ongoing labour market shifts and challenges. As the global recession of 2008–2009 has shown, labour markets can move from relative stability to instability very quickly and unexpectedly. The nature of work and the nature of the employment contract have shifted significantly in recent years, creating both opportunities and challenges for individuals, and shaping career development theory, policy, and practice.

This chapter highlights transformations in the career development sector in Canada over the past 15 years to the present day. Some transformations are responses to external influences — these are “outside-in transformations” — and include such forces as economic restructuring, demographic changes, globalization of the economy, external markets, and technological changes. Education and employment play an

overarching role in these external influences. Other transformations come from within the sector itself — “inside-out transformations” — such as initiatives that support the career development profession in Canada and increase coherence in training throughout the sector.

Studies done by the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** have strongly influenced the outside-in transformation. The OECD report, *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (2004), examined later in this chapter, highlighted the important exchange between public policy and the delivery of career guidance services in the context of these external influences. Policy makers in OECD countries expect career services to “improve the efficiency of educational systems and the labour market and to contribute to social equity” (OECD, 2004, p. 8). The new emphasis on lifelong learning and active labour market policies has heightened the challenges. The report noted that there needs to be wider access to these services in ways that are more flexible and which do not strain “the public purse” (OECD, 2004, p. 8).

One of the strongest, inside-out transformations has been the professionalization of the sector. The 2011 Survey of Canadian Career Service Professionals conducted by CERIC found that 68% of respondents felt that being professionally certified was important or very important to them. They also listed 37 provincial, national, and international associations through which they were presently certified or pursuing certification (CERIC, 2011). In the *Pan-Canadian Mapping Study of the Career Development Sector* (2009), researchers found that career development practitioners place a high priority on access to professional training, and they want more professional recognition in the form of certification and/or licensing. Québec (career counsellors) had licensing and Alberta had voluntary certification in place prior to this mapping study; British Columbia added voluntary certification; as of 2013, New Brunswick, Ontario and Nova Scotia are in the process of developing certification.

This chapter provides several references to influential reports and websites where more information can be reviewed. The reader is encouraged to explore these additional resources to obtain a more comprehensive perspective and to become aware of career development issues and progress in Canada and internationally.

By the end of this chapter, our aim is that you achieve the following learning objectives:

1. Understand the difference between outside-in and inside-out transformations that are taking place in the career development sector in Canada.
2. Outline the ways in which our understanding of career development has changed over time.
3. Explain why it is important to have meaningful dialogue between the career development sector and policy makers.

4. Grasp the importance of research and evaluation in the development of the profession.
5. Explain the reasons for the professionalization of the career development sector.
6. List the organizations, associations, and other bodies that support career development in Canada.

## Transformation From the Outside-In

There have been three significant “outside-in” transformations to the career development profession arising from external forces: (a) an expanding scope of practice, (b) a stronger connection between policy and practice, and (c) the necessity for an evidence base for practice.

### An Expanding Scope of Practice

Until the latter part of the 20th century, career development was seen as focusing primarily on preparing people for the world of work. While career development encompassed the development of the whole person, a critical emphasis was placed on gaining the skills and experience to qualify for, secure, and sustain work (The Counselling Foundation of Canada, 2002). The primary goal of career development in those years was directed at improving one’s employability for obtaining meaningful work.

Career development was, at its simplest, (a) job matching for unemployed adults, and (b) aptitude/interest testing for some high school students near the end of their schooling. In the latter part of the 20th century, the scope of career development widened to include such activities as managing career transitions, balancing various life roles, addressing the need for lifelong learning, and responding to issues of social equity and inclusion.

Career development is no longer job matching, but a holistic discipline that encompasses an individual’s lifespan. Career development has come to embrace not only

### A Quality of Life Approach to Career Development

In the book *A Quality of Life Approach to Career Development*, Geoff Peruniak explores the meaning of work, and highlights a model of quality of life as an integrative and holistic framework for career development. Within this framework, the concept of career includes not only paid work but also other aspects of life experience and learning. The book emphasizes the importance of looking at the person as a whole within an important network of roles and experiences.

Going beyond theoretical discussion, he presents a number of case studies to illustrate the concepts introduced. Peruniak also considers the influence of nature and community in relation to career development that make up the fabric of personal and social meaning.

(University of Toronto Press  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/9781442686885>>)

job information, labour market information, and interest and aptitude testing, but also values, skills development, work environment preferences, passion and talents, and cradle-to-grave life/work competencies. Career development today is seen as a lifelong process of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to explore and discover, make plans and decisions not only about education, training, and employment, but also about personal management, life/work skills, and life/work quality. Career development is considered part of lifelong learning, in that personal and vocational skills constantly change and expand during a lifetime in response to career changes and emerging opportunities.

While there is no universal definition of career development, recent definitions reflect this much-expanded view (and, thus, much-expanded expectations) for the sector:

- Career development refers to activities that enable citizens of any age, at any point in their lives, to (a) identify their capacities, competencies, and interests; (b) make meaningful educational, training, and occupational decisions; and (c) manage their individual career paths in learning and work (OECD, 2004, p. 19)
- “Career development is the lifelong process of managing your living, learning and earning in order to move to where you want to be.” (CCDF <<http://www.ccdf.ca>>)
- Career development is the pattern of one’s total life and all of its roles, not just work; many forces mold one’s choices, especially spirituality and meaning found in work. (Hansen, 2001)

Graham Lowe, in his book *The Quality of Work* (2000), discusses the indicators of quality work and argues that, in a highly developed economy such as Canada's, work must include more than a means of survival: It must include “the opportunity to do personally meaningful, socially useful work that promotes a sense of security and well-being” (p. 6). According to Lowe, the basic pillars of quality work are tasks that are meaningful to workers personally and include:

- a decent standard of living that affords a sense of economic security,
- employment relationships that are respectful,
- healthy and safe work environments,
- worker participation in decision making.

As the career development field has grown through new discoveries, inventions, and real-world experiences there has been an adjustment in thinking in Canada and globally:

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- from intervention at key points in life to a lifelong perspective,
- from psychological testing to tasting the world of work,
- from external expert support to career (self)-management skills,
- from individual guidance to group and self-help approaches. (Zelloth, 2009)

The scope of practice for career development practitioners expanded to include disciplines and jurisdictions previously thought to be outside the realm of career development: (a) elementary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom curricula; (b) labour, business, and government; (c) sector councils; (d) social agencies and mental health; (e) industries; and (f) economics .

This expansion has important implications for practitioners in terms of their professional identity, their qualifications, and their ongoing professional development. Providing a service with a lifelong perspective to cover many life roles requires a very different and much more expansive skill-set than is the case for a service focused primarily on a client's employability. The career development agenda becomes very holistic, multidimensional, and complex as issues of quality of work and quality of life are added to the lifelong perspective. A quote by the late Dr. R. Vance Peavy (2001) captures this well: "When one asks, 'What kind of career should I have?' one is really asking, 'How should I live my life?'" (p. 6).

### ❖ **Stop and Reflect**

After having read the chapters in the textbook, how has your understanding of the role and responsibility of the career practitioner shifted?

## The Connection Between Policy and Practice

In Canada, as in many other countries, career and employment services are public services provided free of charge through schools, career and employment centres, and community-based organizations. Career services in postsecondary institutions are generally funded through student fees. There is also a private practice sector in career development and career counselling, but it is relatively small compared to public provision. This means that career and employment services are largely dependent on public funds and the priorities of politicians and senior policy makers. It is therefore critical that career development be well understood by funders, and that ongoing dialogue and consultation take place between the career development sector and appropriate policy bodies. Regrettably, this has not been the case in most countries, Canada included.

One reason for the insufficiency of consultation between the career development sector and policy bodies is the lack of a common language. Public policy boards and policy makers tend to speak in two languages. "One discussion uses terms such as analysis, outcomes, accountability, costs and benefits, and evidence based

decision making. The second [discussion] includes terms such as influence, popularity, power, alliances, interest groups and change processes" (International Symposium 2001, p. 197). The career development field uses a third and very different language: *process, culture and context, collaboration, and client centred*. It is therefore not surprising that the final report of the OECD Study of Career Guidance Policies (2004) is titled *Bridging the Gap*. The movement towards building stronger connections between policy and career development practice has been strongly influenced by this study.

### **OECD Study Into Career Guidance Policies**

The OECD, located in Paris, began a study in 2002 of Career Guidance Policies in 14 OECD countries, including Canada. This study has been duplicated in over 55 countries thereby providing an immense database of career development policies, models, and practices. *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers* (OECD, 2002a) recognized the need for lifelong career development services as part of effective lifelong learning and active labour market policies. There was widespread consensus across participating countries that a highly developed, lifelong career-information and career development system is central to: (a) supporting a competitive, knowledge-based economy; (b) advancing active employment and welfare policies; and (c) promoting social inclusion. There was also widespread consensus that a transformation of career development systems is needed in order for career development policy and services to play this central role effectively. Four overall conclusions emerged from the study (OECD, 2002a):

1. Career development is both a private and public good. However, career development, lifelong learning, and sustained employability need to be better connected and reflected in policies that focus on access to information and career services across the lifespan.
2. Career development is essential in laying the foundations for lifelong learning. Within the K-12 formal educational system, access is far from universal, and career and educational planning is often submerged by personal and social counselling issues. In most countries, services within postsecondary education are particularly inadequate.
3. While services are lifelong in principle, in practice access is primarily targeted towards youth — most frequently marginalized at-risk youth — and on the unemployed. Large percentages of the population do not have access.
4. In all the countries in the study, components of a quality career development system were identified. To date, no one country has put all the quality pieces together.

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The OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies report on Canada (2002b) highlighted some Canadian strengths, notably:

- the quality of labour market information;
- the development of strategic instruments such as *The Real Game Series*, the *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs*, and the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners* (S&Gs);
- creative support for public-private partnerships and third-sector initiatives.

The report also highlighted weaknesses, including:

- emphasis on producing information resources rather than their effective utilization;
- lack of a coherent framework for career development services within the educational system;
- services for adults based largely on a crisis-oriented deficit model rather than on a proactive developmental model engaging all Canadians;
- the lack of adequate quality assurance across the career development field;
- lack of strategic leadership capable of co-ordinating the breadth of career development provision. (OECD, 2002, p. 25)

The OECD recommendations for Canada and its reviews of guidance services in other countries offer Canada important guideposts for strengthening the career development sector (Bezanson & Renald, 2003). The OECD Report merits periodic revisiting to evaluate levels of progress in all of the areas cited.

### *OECD Bridging the Gap Report*

In their final *Bridging the Gap Report* (OECD, 2004), the components of an effective lifelong career development system were outlined. The features are:

- transparency and ease of access over an individual's lifespan, and the capacity to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients;
- particular attention to key transition points during an individual's lifespan;
- flexibility and innovation in service delivery to reflect the differing needs and circumstances of diverse client groups;
- processes to stimulate regular review and planning of services;
- access to individual guidance by appropriately qualified practitioners for those who need such help, available at times when they need it;

- programs to develop career management skills;
- opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them;
- assured access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises;
- access to comprehensive and integrated educational, occupational, and labour market information;
- involvement of relevant stakeholders.

These features provide a kind of “quality assurance” framework against which effective career development systems can be assessed. They, too, merit revisiting as a checklist for assessing the extent to which Canadian career development services have adopted these features.

Another key outcome of the OECD 2004 study was the establishment of the **International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy** (ICCDPP) whose role is to promote global collaboration in career guidance policy (<<http://www.iccdpp.org>>). This centre is now firmly established as a repository of international policy, research, and practice documents. The OECD study has been hugely influential in making the necessity for stronger connections between career development practice and public policy transparent and concrete.

### *International Symposia*

A secondary, but equally transformational, effect of efforts to bridge policy and practice has been the development of reciprocal international partnerships. Canada has played a substantial role in this development. The International Symposium movement began in 1999 in Ottawa, Canada. In recognition of the tremendous gaps in the communication, vision, and understanding between professionals in the career development field and policy makers, a small team of career development leaders from Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand met to determine a way forward.

They proposed a symposium that would bring together internationally career development professionals and government policy makers to discuss how they could best work together to promote and support a field capable of furthering individual career development as well as overall economic development. From 1999 to 2011, six international symposia have been held; the first two in Canada (funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC); led by CCDF), followed by Australia, Scotland, New Zealand and Hungary. Participating countries have ranged in numbers from 14 to 34. Canada was instrumental in developing the working format of the meetings, which has been maintained, with minor adjustments, for all symposia. A crucial outcome of the symposia has been the formation of teams in each country to bring together, as much as possible, equal numbers of senior policy makers in relevant portfolios, recognized career development researchers, and

representatives of career development practitioners. Each symposium has had specific themes for development including: (a) career development structures/policy models, (b) quality outcomes, (c) costs/benefits, (d) professional qualifications, (e) transformational technology. There have also been sessions on: (a) Prove It Works, (b) Role of the Citizen, and (c) Culture Counts. The expectation is that each country develop an action plan to implement before the next gathering (see <<http://www.iccdpp.org>> for all Country Papers and Symposium Proceedings).

Canada's team began by modeling a strong collaborative and collegial spirit that continues today in the symposium movement. The members have been able to return to their respective provinces and organizations and, with different levels of success, follow through with their commitment for change. Relationship building and collaboration, willingness to learn from other points of view, sharing resources, approaches, and ideas — these are the hallmarks of the movement so far, and they keep getting stronger, providing an increasingly firm foundation for improving national and international career development.

International co-operation has expanded Canada's views of career development models and has inspired professionals to explore new methods to improve services and professional development. It has allowed career development practitioners, researchers and policy makers in Canada to assume a leadership role on global topics such as evidence-based research. Canada's formation of the **Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG)** and the federal government's investment in rigorous evidence-based research has positioned Canada to contribute internationally in this area.

Participation in the symposia also stimulated Canadian study and pursuit of what is now an emerging global "trend" to provide all-age career services in lieu of specific or narrow criteria for service. In this, Canada has benefitted from model examples such as Scotland's all-age career services (Brown, Dent, Galashan, Hirsh, & Hughes, 2006).

The first Pan-Canadian Symposium on Career Development, Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development in 2003 was inspired by the OECD findings and Canada's participation in the International Symposium movement, again funded by HRSDC and hosted by the **Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)**. Representing a wide range of interests in policy, research and practice, teams from all provinces and territories, except the Northwest Territories, participated. Out of the 15 issues identified as important to the advancement of career development in Canada, delegates agreed on three urgent priorities:

1. A comprehensive vision for a coherent delivery system that includes those most often excluded from accessing services (i.e., employed and underemployed adults).
2. A long-term comprehensive strategy to instill a lifelong learning and career

- development culture in education and workforce development policies.
3. Positioning career development in the context of social, economic, and community development. (Pan-Canadian Symposium, 2003)

In 2007, the **Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM)** formed the **Career Development Services Working Group (CDSWG)** to strengthen the connection between policy and practice. The intent of this federally co-ordinated body was to bring together representatives of the provincial and territorial government departments responsible for career and employment services so as to: (a) ensure co-ordination across jurisdictions, (b) share information on areas of mutual interest, and (c) influence the access, quality, and quantity of services available to the Canadian public. Because Canadian career and employment services are highly decentralized, there had been no pan-Canadian policy body that could address shared concerns. The CDSWG funded and led a number of specific projects including a mapping study of the career development sector and a review of quality service standards. Unfortunately, the CDSWG was disbanded in the summer of 2011 when HRSDC discontinued funding.

Dialogue between the career development sector and policy makers has increased substantially in the last decade. However, there remains much work to be done to formalize the connections and make them much more transparent. In many countries, career development themes are part of the political discourse, but this is rare in Canada, both federally and provincially. Additionally, career development practitioners have not embraced the role of advocates for policy change. Professional training programs rarely include policy issues and many practitioners are simply not exposed sufficiently to them. This is deserving of attention on several fronts. As noted earlier, most career services are publicly funded and services that are not well understood by policy makers become vulnerable to funding cuts. At least equally important is advocacy for policies that support access to quality and comprehensive services over the lifespan.

### **The Necessity for an Evidence-Based Practice**

As funding for all forms of public services is subjected to increased scrutiny and accountability, career development service providers face growing pressure to prove that their services are beneficial and cost-effective. In 2004, Magnusson and Roest stated that, despite an increased awareness of the need to better understand how and why career services are effective, we still possess very little concrete evidence that career interventions actually work; the evidence that we do have tends to reflect very specific interventions for specific populations. Hughes, Bosley, Bowes, and Bysshe (2002) stated that one of the challenges in efficacy research in career development was the lack of common outcome measures. Other researchers have suggested the

development of cost-benefit analyses to document the results of career services, and the creation of national research databases to collect and distribute such information (Herr, 2003; International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, 1999, 2001); and increased efficacy research to link career practices to economic efficiency, social equity, and sustainability (Killeen, White, & Watts, 1992).

The CRWG has been a leader in advancing the evidence base for career development services. This group was formed in 2002, following the Pan-Canadian Symposium, in response to a challenge by senior policy makers to “prove that career and employment services work.” The CRWG is a partnership among six Canadian universities (anglophone and francophone) and CCDF. Researchers are independent, but collaborate on projects that fit within the group’s mandate, which is:

- to develop an evaluation framework for gathering evidence-based data on career development programs and services,
- to promote a culture of evaluation in the career development field,
- to conduct research that tests the evaluation framework and builds a bank of evidence-based data on the impact of career development programs and services.

To date, the group has developed an evaluation framework and has tested it in workplaces where career development programs were offered to employees and in employment centres where clients need labour market information to assist them in decision making or in searching for work. The workplace research took place over 3 years in which three different programs were implemented in a range of workplaces, and the impacts of these programs on employees were tracked at 3 months, 6 months and, in one program, 12 months after program completion. All programs had positive results with significant impacts ( $p < .01$ ) on personal self-efficacy, career self-management, self-esteem, skills development, and job retention. All research reports are accessible at <[www.crwg-gdrc.ca](http://www.crwg-gdrc.ca)>.

The CRWG and CCDF have continued to conduct leading-edge research to further refine and apply the evaluation framework and extend the sector’s evidence base. Members of the CRWG and CCDF are also contributors to an international working group on evidence-based practice, established after Symposium 2009 by the executive director of the ICCDPP. The working group collaborates on sharing research and on joint projects to advance the evidence base. Advancements are reported at each symposium. Information on additional international developments can be found at <<http://www.iccdpp.org>>.

There is also indirect evidence that persuasively supports the positive impact of career development on participation in postsecondary education. For example, the Canadian 2004 Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) tracked movement of youth between high school, postsecondary education, and the labour market. It found that

those who continued in postsecondary education had achieved higher levels of both academic and social engagement in high school than those who did not continue to a postsecondary institution (Statistics Canada, 2006). Academic engagement and achievement are influenced by the extent to which learners believe their learning is relevant to their personal future direction. A key goal of career development in the education sector is to help learners make relevant connections between what they are learning now and what they might pursue in the future. The number one reason given for leaving school was “lack of fit” or the need to change programs. The available evidence on behalf of career development is thus positive and expanding. However, research gaps remain, and most research has been short term and focused on immediate results. Longer-term and longitudinal research is needed, as is research on broader and more representative samples of the population.

The CRWG would argue that the professional practitioner needs to evaluate career development processes and outcomes constantly and be able to make direct links between what they do as practitioners and the results they achieve with individuals and groups. Evaluation needs to be part of everyday professional practice. However, evaluation is usually a very small component of professional preparation programs at both the diploma and degree levels.

To some extent, the catalysts for these three significant transformations — expanding practice, connection of polity to practice, and growth of evidence-based practice — have come from outside the sector. But significant transformations have also been occurring from inside the career development sector as the practitioners define and expand their field of practice.

## **Transformation From the Inside-Out**

The OECD in its study of several countries found that the career development sector was “weakly professionalized.” Membership in professional associations, standards for practice, licensing and certification of practitioners, a clear and enforced code of ethics, and clear and consistent professional training routes for qualification were all areas that were inconsistent at best and non-existent at worst. There has been huge progress towards a more “highly professionalized” career development sector in Canada since 2000. Many of the key foundations necessary to support and sustain a profession have been developed and are now in place.

### **The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs) and the Movement Towards Certification**

Having a framework of standards and guidelines is key to formalizing a practice and advancing the profession. As can be seen from the emphasis on the S&Gs in this

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textbook, a clear framework to regulate entry and progression pathways is essential in defining a profession and is a key aspect of its effectiveness. The S&Gs allow enough capacity to “mix and match” to reflect many delivery settings, while still maintaining a professional standard. The S&Gs have been highly influential in increasing professionalism in the field. They have been used as the basis for establishing career practitioner certification in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia and developing procedures moving towards certification in Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The S&Gs were updated in 2011–2012 and will continue to be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain a current and relevant resource.

There is a unique situation in the province of Québec with respect to standards and certification. Career counselling (i.e., orientation professionnelle) has been a regulated profession in Québec for many years. Career counsellors must have a master’s degree and be licensed by L’Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d’orientation du Québec (OCCOQ). Career development practitioners without master’s degrees also practise in Québec but cannot legally call themselves career counsellors. Despite these differences, the S&Gs have been recognized by the OCCOQ and validated against their own competency framework.

It is noteworthy that in Québec, where career counselling is a licensed profession, undergraduate and graduate programs specializing in career counselling exist in most universities. This is generally not the case in other provinces, where graduate programs typically provide a small number of career development courses within an education or counselling psychology program. Many community colleges offer specialized diplomas or certificates in career development and such programs are increasing in number. Offerings at the university level are also slowly expanding (Burwell & Kalbfleish, 2010). Depending on the province, certification may be as a Canadian Career Development Practitioner or a Canadian Career Development Professional, both with the acronym CCDP. Certification is a growing trend across Canada, and a very positive development for increasing the professionalism of the career development sector as well as promoting greater consistency in training programs.

## Professional Membership and Professional Development

Membership in a professional association is an important component of professional identity in many fields. Professional associations maintain oversight of their field, protect the public interest, and are usually a source of professional development and networking for its members. In the provinces with certification or licensing in place, it is the association’s role to manage these processes.

Unlike many countries, Canada does not have a national career development association, although there is a small, vibrant, Career Counsellor Chapter within the national Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), and CERIC

plays a convenor role among the many sectors that intersect career development in Canada. At the provincial level, career development associations exist in eight provinces and there are signs of associations beginning to form in other provinces and territories. This is a significant increase since year 2000.

In 2008, the Canadian Council for Career Development (CCCD) was created as an alliance of provincial career development associations and other key sector stakeholders (government, postsecondary, private, and non-profits). CCCD members work collaboratively on common priorities and share promising research and practice in the hope of positioning itself as a point of contact for policy issues.

A critical component of a professional identity is keeping abreast of current research and promising new practices.

Professional conferences are the most common way for professionals to stay current. Many provincial associations host their own annual conferences. From 1975 until 2006, there was an annual national conference titled NATCON (National Consultation on Career Development) funded in part by the federal government and **The Counselling Foundation of Canada**. Funding ceased and for a period of time, the field was adrift without a pan-Canadian professional development opportunity. Support came from the **Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling** (CERIC), a national organization dedicated to promoting career-counselling-related research and professional development opportunities across Canada. CERIC, with support from The Counselling Foundation of Canada, launched Cannexus in 2007, a national career development conference designed to promote the exchange of information and explore innovative approaches in the areas of career counselling and career development. This conference is now firmly established as “the” national conference of choice for the sector.

CERIC has also provided the profession with *The Canadian Journal of Career Development*, an academic peer-reviewed journal that began in 2002 through support from The Counselling Foundation of Canada, and *Careering*, a free magazine for career development professionals. As well, CERIC has encouraged professional development for many years through awards and bursaries to support students in their education. Connect with these programs and resources at the CERIC website <<http://ceric.ca>>.

A new interest in professional development and training has also emerged for provincial government employees who provide career and employment services. Comprehensive training programs now run in five provinces and one territory. The courses are fully aligned with the S&Gs and preapproved for the **Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner (EVGP)** credential, an international certification through the **International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG)**. Please visit <<http://www.iaevg.org>> for more on IAEVG and their EVGP certification.

If career practitioners in the field are to be active members of a career development community, motivated to experiment with new ideas and contribute to the

field, they need to be proud of their profession and feel recognized as important contributors to society. A large part of that will come from the availability and uptake of professional and personal development options. Professional membership, training, and certification are potent aids in public recognition and credibility. The career development profession has been greatly strengthened over the past few years through the work of these organizations and associations. There remains much work to be accomplished but the “train to increased professionalism” has left the station.

### The Professional Career Development Roadmap

Any ongoing movement towards professionalism in any sector greatly benefits from a roadmap that lays out where a sector is, its strengths and weaknesses, and priorities for continued progress. The Pan-Canadian Mapping Study in 2008 (Bezanson, O'Reilly, & Magnusson, 2009), funded by the Career Development Services Working Group (CDSWG), provided such a roadmap for the career development sector. The study was an online survey completed by nearly 1,000 agency managers and practitioners in 10 provinces. The analysis of responses revealed that respondents were quite representative of their relative provincial populations.

This study confirmed that the sector is highly diverse in types of workplaces and service delivery arrangements. Career development practitioners work in community-based agencies, public and private schools, educational institutions/departments, employment agencies, special interest group and settlement agencies, private career guidance businesses, insurance companies, business, unions, apprenticeship boards, co-op education, sector councils, government, business organizations, media, companies, government department career centres, private counselling practice, human resource offices in large corporations, career guidance centres, career libraries, human resource departments, research organizations (business, economic, labour market, education) government (human resources, economics, labour market information), and foundations. And they have many titles, including: career counsellor, employment counsellor, career coach, career practitioner, human resources practitioner, vocational rehabilitation counsellor, job search practitioner, labour market information specialist, trainer, adult educator, work developer, and settlement counsellor.

The following are the key findings from the study:

- Career development practitioners (CDPs) and their agencies appear to operate within a well-defined scope of practice. They have a clear employment, career, and labour market mandate. This is an interesting and encouraging finding in the context of the “outside-in” transformation noted earlier in this chapter of an expanding scope of practice.
- The career development practitioner population is, in a sense, self-made. CDPs come from a wide range of work settings and educational

backgrounds, and they come to career and employment services as a second or third occupational stop in their careers. They are a well-educated population, predominantly female, with a very high level of job satisfaction. At the same time, specialized training in career development is rare and haphazard, achieved through either preservice or on-the-job training. In terms of directions the sector needs to take in the near future, access to professional training was ranked highest by CDPs, and second highest by managers.

- Professional identity and recognition emerge as recurring, important issues for the practitioner community; specifically, practitioners want more professional recognition in the form of certification and licensing processes.
- There is little to no consistency in the requirements for career development jobs. Some respondents are of the view that this permits generalists into the field, which is essential given the diverse public served; others are of the view that more rigorous and consistent standards for recruitment are necessary. This lack of clear standards presents a major challenge in solidifying the professional identity of the sector.
- There is very little consistency in job titles, particularly among English-language practitioners. This creates confusion for the public, who must discern what services are being offered and where, and compromises the professional identity and coherence of the career development sector.
- There does not appear to be an established training and professional development culture within the sector whereby practitioners regularly participate in training to remain up to date with new developments, tools, and skills
- There are a relatively small number of direct service providers; it is difficult to imagine that the numbers are adequate to the need. A survey of how the public perceives its career and employment needs and services would be a very informative study.

Five priorities for action from the study were suggested as follows:

1. Promote and enhance a training and development culture within the sector.
2. Promote increased understanding and use of competency frameworks such as the *Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners* (S&Gs) and the *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* or their equivalencies as tools to increase coherence in the sector.
3. Support provincial and territorial initiatives to introduce certification programs for Career Development Practitioners and a mechanism to support their compatibility and ensure cross border mobility.

4. Conduct a policy review of criterion-based career development and employment services.
5. Conduct a survey to assess public need for, access to, and satisfaction with current career and employment service provision.

As the profession addresses these issues and continues to grow, its professional roots will deepen. Recognition of the value of the profession — seen from within the field and from without — reflects a growing professional identity. As this identity becomes stronger and government and business sectors recognize the value of career development to the whole of society, a wide range of disciplines will begin to work towards similar goals for the preferred future of individuals and a healthy labour market. This in turn broadens the range of work and placement options for the career profession.

## Conclusion

The career development community in Canada has made great strides in the years since 2000. There is an unprecedented investment in targeted research, a significantly stronger evidence base, and a renewed commitment to training/professional development, accountability, collaboration, and cohesion across the field. The sector has the tools, supports, and structures needed to continue to grow as a profession. There is a spirit of collaboration among associations and organizations across the country and an international movement in which Canada is a key partner, with career development, lifelong learning and the interface between policy and practice high on its agenda. The career development landscape is transforming in dramatic and exciting ways. Hopefully, the three P's — Policy, Proof, and Professionalism — will dominate the coming decade and further transform the career development sector.

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## Glossary

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**Canadian Council for Career Development (CCCD)** is an umbrella group that promotes collaboration on career development issues among provincial/territorial and national career development associations, action groups, and related organizations (<<http://cccda.org/cccda>>).

**Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)** is a recognized leader both nationally and internationally in the field of career development. Established in 1979 as a non-profit charitable foundation, CCDF works on projects that advance career development and the capacity of the profession to respond with compassion and skill to all clients and stakeholders in an ever-changing work environment (<<http://ccdf.ca/>>).

**Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC)** is a charitable organization dedicated to promoting career-counselling-related research and professional development opportunities across Canada (<<http://www.ceric.ca>>).

**Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG)** strengthens career development by improving the overall evidence base for career development practice “with an emphasis on both informing policy and building a evaluation culture in the sector,” and increasing “pan-Canadian and international sharing of research and promising practices, with an emphasis on sharing French and English research.” (Quoted from <<http://www.crwg-gdrc.ca/crwg/index.php/about-us>>.) Main website is at <<http://www.crwg-gdrc.ca/crwg>>.

**Career Development Services Working Group (CDSWG)** was created by the FLMM in 2007 to ensure co-ordination across services and to share information on areas of mutual interest and concern related to the development and delivery of career development services at the regional and pan-Canadian levels.

The goals of the CDSWG were to:

- identify and promote best practice,
- increase the Career Development Services knowledge base through research,
- facilitate access to Career Development Services,
- enhance the quality and effectiveness of Career Development Services,
- establish and strengthen domestic and international networking opportunities.

The CDSWG was disbanded in 2011. There is, however, continued interest across the career development sector to secure a renewed mandate and funding for this body.

**The Counselling Foundation of Canada** is a family foundation established by Frank G. Lawson in 1959 to create and enrich career counselling programs and improve the technical skills of career counsellors. The object of the Foundation is to engage in charitable and educational activities for the benefit of people, thus enabling them to improve their lifestyles and make a more effective contribution to their communities.

**Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner (EVGP)** is an international certification program for career practitioners offered by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (EVGP). The certification is built around a set of international competencies that practitioners need in order to provide quality service. The EVGP competencies were developed from and are closely aligned with the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners* (S&Gs) were validated with a pool of 700 practitioners working in a variety of different jobs across 38 countries. Like the Canadian S&Gs, the EVGP competencies are made up of a set of core competencies that focus on the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed by all practitioners and a set of specialized competencies required for some practitioners depending on the nature of their work. Courses may be “preapproved” as eligible towards the EVGP and/or individual practitioners may apply directly to the Center for Credentialing in Education to have their qualifications reviewed for the EVGP certification. Additional information and application forms for the EVGP can be found at <[www.iaevg.org](http://www.iaevg.org)>.

**Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM)** is composed of provincial and territorial ministers, and the federal minister responsible for the labour market. The forum of Labour Market Ministers was created in 1983 to promote discussion and co-operation on labour market matters.

**International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG)** is a worldwide guidance and counselling association, whose mission is to promote the development and quality of educational and vocational guidance. IAEVG's mission is also to ensure that all citizens who need and want educational and vocational guidance and counselling can receive this counselling from a competent

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and recognized professional. The association publishes a newsletter three times a year. Furthermore IAEVG publishes the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, a refereed journal publishing articles related to work and leisure, career development, career counselling, guidance, and career education. The website is at <<http://www.iaevg.org/>>.

### International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP)

facilitates international sharing of knowledge and information concerning public policy and career development issues. ICCDPP is a base for knowledge and information including proceedings from international symposia, and reports and news provided to the site by the users and by other international contacts. ICCDPP is supported by organizations such as the OECD, individual country donations and a collaborative relationship with Kuder, Inc. See <<http://www.iccdpp.org>>.

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** is an international economic organization that promotes policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems and to assist governments in understanding what drives economic, social, and environmental change. The OECD is found at <<http://www.oecd.org>>.

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## Discussion and Activities

### Discussion

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1. Review the three definitions of career development given in the chapter.
  - (a) Identify any features/themes that are common across all three definitions.
  - (b) Identify any features/themes that are not common across all three definitions.
  - (c) Which definition comes closest to how you would define career development?

Give your rationale.
2. Policy makers increasingly require “evidence” of positive impacts for the services they fund. What “evidence” do you think would convince policy makers? What is your rationale? How easy or difficult do you think it would be to gather this “evidence”? Why?
3. Prioritize the findings of the *Pan-Canadian Mapping Study* from your perspective (i.e., those issues which you think are the highest priorities for Canadians). Give your rationale.
4. “Discussions on public policy have two languages. One uses terms such as analysis,

*outcomes, accountability, costs and benefits, and evidence based decision making. The second includes terms such as influence, popularity, power, alliances, interest groups and change processes” (International Symposium 2001, Papers and Proceedings, p. 197).* Imagine you are in a meeting with career development peers in a services agency. Have a discussion (15 minutes) on career development that uses these two languages. After 15 minutes, discuss how easy/difficult it was to talk about career development in policy language and how important you think it is.

### Personal Reflection

As you have progressed through this textbook, what new innovative ideas have emerged for you in regards to career development? How would you address experimenting and/or implementing your innovative ideas in the community or your workplace? Outline and describe the steps you would take.

### Career Practitioner Role

What does it mean to be considered an active member of the career development community? How does being part of a career development community influence your understanding of professional identity? What are the key elements which constitute professional engagement in the field? Explain each element.

### Activities

1. The OECD (2002) lists features of an effective lifelong career development system. Using this background document, conduct a short (20-minute) interview with an individual who provides career development services (a guidance counsellor/guidance head/career development practitioner/career services manager/employment counsellor, etc.) and get their assessment of the extent to which these features are in place in their specific work setting. Find out as much as you can about where the individual you interview thinks the current system is weak or strong and why. Write a short report on your findings.
2. The Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG) was formed to address two important issues in the field of career development:
  - strengthening the overall evidence-base for career development practice with an emphasis on both informing policy and building an evaluation culture in the sector;
  - increasing pan-Canadian and international sharing of research and promising practices, with an emphasis on sharing French and English research.

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Conduct a web search on “evidence-based practice in career development.” Review various web resource’s to identify the most helpful websites, resources, and articles. Share the list with the class.

### **Resources and Readings**

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#### **Resources**

##### **Websites**

Association of Career Professionals (ACP) — global organization  
[<http://www.acpinternational.org/>](http://www.acpinternational.org/).

Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) <<http://www.ccdf.ca/>>.

Canadian Council for Career Development (CCCD) <<http://cceda.org/cccda>>.

Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling <<http://ceric.ca>>.

*The Canadian Journal of Career Development* — academic, peer-reviewed journal  
[<http://ceric.ca/cjcd/>](http://ceric.ca/cjcd/).

Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence Based Practice in Career Development <<http://www.crwg-gdrc.ca/index.html>>.

*Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*  
[<http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career\\_dev/>](http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career_dev/).

Cannexus — National Career Development Conference <<http://www.cannexus.ca>>.

ContactPoint <<http://www.contactpoint.ca>> and OrientAction <<http://www.orientaction.ca>> — multisector online communities for career development professionals.

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG)  
[<http://www.iaevg.org/iaevg/index.cfm?lang=2>](http://www.iaevg.org/iaevg/index.cfm?lang=2).

International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy  
[<http://www.iccdpp.org/>](http://www.iccdpp.org).

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[<http://www.oecd.org/about/>](http://www.oecd.org/about/).

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#### **Supplementary Readings**

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