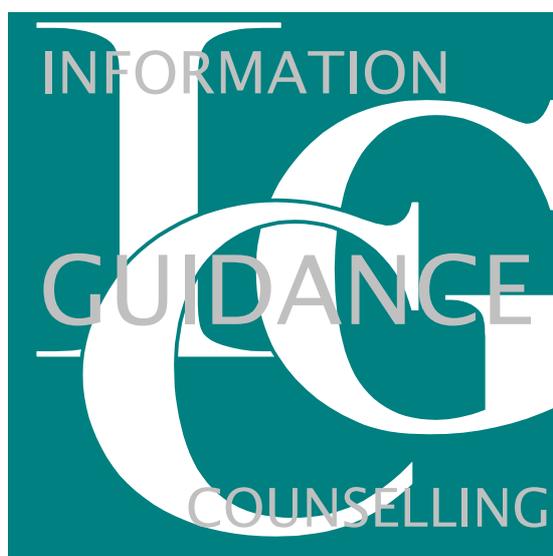


OECD REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES



KOREA

COUNTRY NOTE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. In the autumn of 2000 the OECD's Education Committee and its Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee endorsed a comparative review of career information, guidance and counselling policies. Participating countries complete a detailed national questionnaire, and after its completion host a short visit by an expert review team. Korea was the eleventh country to host such a visit, from 5 to 9 August 2002.¹ The team had meetings with policy-makers in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Ministry of Labour; visited two research and development centres; and also visited a school, a university, a public employment security centre, a women's career development centre and a youth counselling centre. In addition, a half-day seminar was held which was attended by twenty policy-makers, researchers and guidance practitioners.²

2. Drawing upon the visit, the questionnaire response and other documentation, this report summarises the impressions of the review team, and its suggestions for ways in which policies for career information, guidance and counselling might be further developed in Korea. After a brief contextual introduction, the report describes the key features of the main parts of the career guidance³ system, including some comments on each. It then offers some general comments on five key topics:

- Schools and higher education.
- Public employment services.
- Other services for adults.
- Professional issues.
- Co-ordination and strategic leadership.

1. For members of the review team, see Appendix 1.

2. For the review visit programme, see Appendix 2.

3. Here and elsewhere the term 'career guidance' is often used generically, as shorthand for 'career information, guidance and counselling services'.

2. THE CONTEXT

3. Since the Second World War the Korean peninsula has been divided into the Republic of Korea in the south and North Korea in the north, with a demilitarised zone between the two. The Republic of Korea is densely populated, with over 47 million people, three-quarters of them living in urban areas. The proportion who are foreign-born is very low (0.4%).⁴

4. From being one of the poorest countries in the world, the Republic of Korea has experienced half-a-century of spectacular industrialisation and economic growth. In 1953 its per capita income was 1% of the OECD average; by 1992 it was almost one-third of that average and on a par with Greece and Portugal. Following the economic crisis which beset Korea and the other 'Asian tigers' in 1997 and a recession in 1998, Korea has made a strong though not yet consolidated recovery. Its current per capita income (15,700 US dollars in 2001, at purchasing price parities) is slightly under two-thirds of the OECD average, and 57% of that in neighbouring Japan.

5. Whereas until the early 1970s over half of Korea's labour force was occupied in agriculture, the figure is now only 11.6% (OECD average 7.8%). The proportion working in the service sector is 61% (OECD average 65.2%). Employment in the manufacturing sector has been largely concentrated in the *chaebols*: Korean-owned industrial conglomerates (especially within the steel, electronics, petrochemicals, shipbuilding, machinery and non-ferrous metals industries which have been the main engine of Korea's economic growth) offering long-term employment and extensive internal labour markets.⁵ Across the labour market as a whole, however, only 47.6% of all employees are 'regular workers', who work more than one year in a firm and are paid standard wages plus bonuses and overtime; the rest are either temporary workers (usually with contracts of between one month and a year) or daily workers. The average male job tenure in Korea is 5.7 years, as opposed to 9.8 years in the European Union and 11.3 years in Japan.

6. The unemployment rate in Korea was as low as 2.4% between 1991 and 1997; it subsequently grew to a peak of 8.5% in early 1999, but by 2000 had fallen back to 4.2%.⁶ This is still low by OECD standards (OECD average 6.3%), but so are the female labour force participation rate (51.8% v. OECD average of 61.3%) and the proportion of jobs that are part-time (7.1% v. OECD average of 15.3%): a strong cultural expectation remains for married women with children to withdraw from the labour market. Young men have to spend 27 months on military service: this, too, reduces unemployment levels. Only 11.3% of unemployed people receive financial benefits: this reflects the short duration of such benefits (from 3 to 8 months) and the fact that some unemployed people are not eligible for them. Vocational training can however be provided for some of those who are ineligible for financial benefits.

7. Korea has had a small public sector: in 1991 general government expenditure and taxation stood at 20% of GNP – less than half the average level for OECD countries. A key factor in Korea's economic development, however, has been the level of investment in education. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is 7% (OECD average 5.7%): this is in addition to substantial private investment (all

4. These and the other figures in this section are taken from OECD sources, including *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Korea* (1998), *Education at a Glance* (2001), *OECD Economic Surveys: Korea* (2001) and *OECD in Figures: Statistics on the Member Countries* (2002).

5. Ashton, D., Green, F., Sung, J. & James, D. (2002), The evolution of education and training strategies in Singapore, Taiwan and S. Korea: a development model of skill formation. *Journal of Education and Work*, 15(1), pp.5-30.

6. The latest figure is under 3%.

schools and tertiary institutions charge tuition fees, and there is a substantial private sector at all levels of the education system). Within 40 years, a modern education and training system has been created almost from scratch⁷, with participation and completion rates at all levels of formal education which are now among the top handful of nations: a spectacular achievement which 'no other country starting from similar circumstances can match'.⁸ The percentage of 25-29-year-olds with upper secondary education is 94% (OECD average 72%); the proportion of 30-34-year-olds with tertiary education is 33% (OECD average 24%). Korea scored highly in the first results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, including the highest mean scores among OECD countries for scientific literacy.⁹ ICT usage is extensive: Korea has recently outpaced European and North American countries in the proportion of its population who are high-speed broadband internet users.

8. The policy move towards lifelong learning in Korea was set out by a Presidential Commission on Education Reform in 1996. This affirmed that instead of placing its emphasis on teaching in formal educational settings, policy should focus on learning, on the needs and circumstances of learners of all ages, and on identifying the times, places and learning media best suited to meeting those needs. It also asserted that instead of concentrating learning opportunities in the early years of life, public policy should seek to create learning opportunities for people of all ages at any time of their lives. Steps taken to implement these reforms included a nationwide awareness-raising campaign and the establishment of an educational Credit Bank System. Following the economic crisis of 1997, the shift from a material-based manufacturing country to a knowledge-based country was proposed as one of the government's 'six great policy goals'. Accordingly, the Vocational Training Promotion Act which came into force in 1999 affirmed that training should be conducted in stages and in a systematic way throughout a worker's entire career, taking into account the hopes as well as the abilities and aptitudes of the individual. A commentary on the Act stated that 'the emergence of a knowledge-based society wherein capabilities of an individual are highly valued calls for an environment that is supportive of the workers' voluntary effort to develop their vocational competency throughout life and the enterprise's effort to establish an institutional basis on which to raise the kind of human resources they need'.¹⁰

9. An important policy issue for Korea is the ageing of the population, due to drops in the birth rate and gains in life expectancy. Its elderly dependency ratio, currently the third lowest in the OECD, is projected to double by 2022 (the most rapid current rate of ageing among OECD countries) and to be the sixth highest in 2050. The traditional pattern of children (especially eldest sons) caring for elderly parents is weakening, but pension schemes are at an early stage of development and are still limited in nature.

7. Although Korea benefits from the strong respect for education within the Confucian tradition, Japanese colonial policy during its occupation of Korea in the early part of the 20th century meant that by 1944, a year before the liberation, 86% of the whole Korean population were officially uneducated (cited in OECD (1998), *Alternative Approaches to Financing Lifelong Learning: Country Report on Korea*, p.10. Paris).

8. OECD (1998), *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Korea*, p.100. Paris.

9. OECD (2001), *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*. Paris.

10. Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (2001), *Vocational Training in Korea*, p.29. Seoul.

3. THE KOREAN CAREER GUIDANCE SYSTEM

10. The main core elements of the career guidance system in Korea are the guidance system in schools, focused largely around college entrance, and the information and employment counselling services offered by the public employment services. There has also however been a growth of services in higher education and of community-based services. There seem to be few linkages between these sectors. In all of them, much use is made of psychometric testing and also of ICT (cf. para.7).

11. Most models of career guidance in Korea have been adapted from North American and European models. But they are also influenced by Korean values (stemming largely from Confucian tradition), in a number of respects. One is the value attached to respect for elders, deference, and obedience to authority. This means that the influence of parents on young people's career choices tends to be stronger than in Western countries¹¹. It also means that guidance tends to be more directive in nature: this may explain the heavy emphasis on 'test and tell' guidance based on psychometric tests. Another influence is the importance of endurance (learning to bear one's problems), maintaining social 'face' and avoiding embarrassment: these may act to restrict the nature of guidance purposes and particularly the extent of self-disclosure within them¹², but conversely may also increase the importance of affective confidence-building elements in guidance programmes. In addition, guidance programmes for young people seem to be more strongly influenced by prescribed moral and social values than is the case in most Western countries.

4. THE MAIN SECTORS

4.1 Schools

12. The school system comprises six years of primary school, followed by three years of middle school, and three years of senior high school. There is a national curriculum, but some decisions about the detailed content of the curriculum have been devolved to the 16 provinces and to individual schools. The first educational decisions with major career implications are made at the end of junior high school, around the age of 15. Of students in senior high school, nearly two-thirds are in academic 'general high schools', and the remainder in vocational/technical high schools. Most of the former aim at college entrance; it is also now much more possible than in the past for students to go to college from the vocational/technical

11. This tendency is reinforced by the limited pension provision (para.9), which means that parents in their old age may be substantially dependent on their children (and therefore on the career choices they have made).

12. It has been suggested that the greater stigma attached to help-seeking in Korea might explain the appeal of cybercounselling, with its anonymity (Lim, E.-M., Lee, Y.-S. & Choi, H. (2002), Cyber counselling in South Korea. Research poster session at Annual Conference of American Counseling Association, New Orleans, USA).

schools.¹³ The pressure for entrance to prestigious colleges¹⁴ means that many parents supplement school provision with private tuition for their children.

13. The main guidance specialist in schools is the school counsellor, who is a qualified teacher with (usually) some additional specialist training. Their role covers not only educational and career guidance but also dealing with personal and behavioural issues: the emphasis appears to be shifting from the latter to the former. The core part-time specialist training for school counsellors comprises around 240 hours over one year, leading to a certificate; some school counsellors have a master's degree in education (which may or may not have included career guidance components); some, however, have only had limited training (perhaps between three days and two weeks). Across the 4,820 junior and senior high schools, there are only 185 school counsellors devoting two-thirds or more of their time to this role; other schools usually have one or perhaps more such counsellors with a smaller amount of time – perhaps a few hours per week – for this work. The task is fairly commonly given to teachers nearing retirement.

14. Most guidance delivery in schools, however, is provided by the homeroom teachers. Almost all subject teachers also act as homeroom teachers for a group of students, seeing them for a short period (perhaps ten minutes) at the beginning and end of each day, largely for registration purposes. They also have a variety of other duties in relation to their group, which can include administrative, disciplinary and guidance tasks. The role of the school counsellor is to supply the homeroom teachers with information and support, and to see students who require specialist help.

15. In practice, most guidance provision is focused around college entrance, and particularly decisions about which colleges and field of study to apply for. Such guidance is informed largely by school marks and aptitude/interest test results, and appears in general to pay little or no attention to clarifying longer-term career aspirations.¹⁵

16. Career education is currently being introduced into the school curriculum. The 7th School Curriculum (the latest version of the national curriculum framework, which is revised every five years) permits 'employment and career' as an elective 'extra-curricular' subject for two hours per week for one semester (i.e. a total of 68 hours), both in junior and senior high school. The 16 provinces decide where it is to be offered, and whether it is to be mandatory or optional for schools to implement it; in the last resort, however, it is usually left to the school principal to decide whether it is to be offered or not. In the case of the school visited by the review team, career education was compulsory for all 10th grade students (aged 15/16). In Seoul, materials have been developed at provincial level to encourage junior high schools to infuse career education components into all school subjects, including information on occupations related to the subject.¹⁶ In general, the content of such programmes is developed at provincial level. In-service programmes to support the programmes seem, however, to be limited. In some cases the school counsellor

13. This was recommended by OECD (1998), *op. cit.* (ref. 8), p.201. By 2005, the college entrance examinations are to be extended to include vocational options. A recent report, however, suggests that this trend has forced students in vocational schools to take courses which are too academic and difficult for them to grasp, and are irrelevant and ineffective for students whose next step is to find employment. The report accordingly suggests that such schools should offer programmes adapted to 'the characteristics of target learners to help them in their career pursuits as it was originally intended at the time of their conception' (Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (2001), *Vocational Education System in Korea*, p.27. Seoul).

14. This is driven not only by social status but also by the fact that the *chaebols* have traditionally recruited new managers and professionals almost exclusively from a handful of top universities.

15. In the school visited by the review team, the resources in the school counselling office were concerned exclusively with college entrance; no information on occupations was evident.

16. Questionnaire response, section 7.2.

may be involved in teaching career education, but often those involved are teachers of other subjects who have had no extra training for this work.

17. There is little opportunity for most school students to experience the world of work. Vocational courses in senior high schools are legally obliged to include work experience, commonly in the form of a '2 + 1' pattern in which some or all of the final year is spent on appropriate work-based training. Some difficulties are experienced in securing adequate placements for such programmes, and this appears to consume most of whatever resources and energies are available for school-industry co-operation. Certainly there are very few exploratory work-experience programmes for vocational education students prior to choosing their vocational field, or for general education students. Elementary and junior high schools may organise 'career days' or 'career weeks' which include work visits. Schools sometimes also have careers talks from parents, alumni, local business people or career experts. In addition, senior high schools are required to encourage all students to undertake community work during school vacations: this is given credit by colleges for entrance purposes (largely on the grounds that it indicates the possession of social and moral values) and may provide an opportunity for some work experience in the social-service sector. The Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET) has developed guidelines for 'work-based career guidance'¹⁷, but few schools appear at present to be implementing these guidelines in an extensive way.

18. Schools have access to some external support for their guidance work. Each provincial office of education has an Education and Science Research Institute, which may provide career education guidelines and information resources¹⁸, and also undertake some monitoring of career education provision. Vocational counsellors from the public employment services commonly¹⁹ visit schools to administer psychometric tests and run group sessions to help students interpret the results; they have also recently piloted one-week job-seeking courses for senior high school students in the period immediately after the college entrance examinations. In addition, schools can refer students to local youth counselling services for psychometric testing and vocational counselling as well as other forms of counselling (see para.31).

4.2 Higher education

19. Korea has 163 four-year universities and colleges, 11 teachers' colleges, 159 vocational junior colleges, 19 polytechnics, and 24 other higher education institutions.²⁰ In 1998, there were also around 63,000 private learning institutions.²¹

20. Of the 161 four-year universities and colleges surveyed recently, 92% have a job information centre.²² These offer job-placement services, and also arrange for employers to carry out on-campus

17. Jin, M. & Son, Y.M. (2001), A study on the programme of work-based career guidance for junior high school students of Korea. In *Research Abstracts 2001*, pp.77-79. Seoul: KRIVET.

18. In the case of at least one province (Seoul), this includes a website containing career information (mainly links to other sites), resources (e.g. on experience-based learning about work) and a career counselling section (including a bulletin board on which enquiries and responses are anonymously posted).

19. The review team was told that such programmes currently cover around 200,000 young people per year (though subsequent information suggested that this figure embraces all young people up to the age of 24, including those who have left school).

20. Korea Education Development Institute and Ministry of Education and Human Resources (2002), *Statistical Year Book of Education*. Seoul.

21. OECD (1998), *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Korea*. Paris.

recruitment interviews. In most cases (68%) this provision is supported by on-line services. The services are in general staffed with graduates who have little or no specific training for this work, apart from short in-service programmes provided by the Association of Job Information Centres at the Higher Education Level. Thirty institutions (19%) have student-run Graduate Preparation Committees, which run job fairs and job-briefing sessions for graduating students: in general, these are public universities with less active job information centres.

21. Most four-year institutions (79%) have counselling services which are termed 'student life research centres'. These may include some career counselling: at the university visited by the review team, it was estimated that perhaps 15% of students seeking counselling came primarily to discuss career issues. At this university – a prestigious women's university – most of the work was carried out in one-hour counselling sessions, with some group counselling with groups of 5-10 students, and with fairly extensive use of psychometric tests. The waiting list for interviews was commonly up to two weeks. The centre's professional staff had master's degrees in counselling and were licensed by the Korea Counselling and Psychotherapy Association; much use was also made of counselling students being trained in the university, working in the centre under supervision. There were plans to merge the career counselling part of the centre's work with the job information centre, to form a new career development centre. It seems that this latter structure is still fairly unusual in Korean universities and colleges.

22. A little over one in four of four-year institutions (28.5%) offer career education modules within the curriculum. At the university visited, there were plans to develop a one-semester course for all students, and also to extend opportunities for students to undertake work-experience internships – such opportunities tend to be limited at present, reflecting the limited co-operation between universities and enterprises noted in an earlier OECD report.²³

23. Within these various services, use is made of the data on graduate destinations which are collected on a mandatory basis on three occasions during the first year after graduation. Some institutions also make extensive use of alumni to support their programmes.

24. In general, it seems that 61% of students in four-year institutions have never received any on-campus career development services; even among those in their final two years, the figure is over 25%. Most of the services experienced are one-off recruitment-oriented events such as special lectures or seminars. There is evidence of demand for improved services both from students and from employers.²⁴

25. Some vocational training institutions have their own services for career guidance and job placement. Most, however, make use of the public employment services for these purposes.

4.3 Public employment services

26. In the wake of the economic crisis of 1997-98 (para.4), a range of macroeconomic and structural reforms were introduced, particularly in the areas of labour market policies and social safety-nets. One was to establish a network of what are now 168 public employment security centres, to provide a one-stop service for employment insurance, access to vocational training, and job placement. These centres are

22. This and the other figures in this section are taken from a KRIVET research project. For an abstract, see Lee, J.-Y. (2001), Career guidance at higher education level in Korea. In *Research Abstracts 2001*, pp.43-46. Seoul: KRIVET.

23. OECD (1998), *op. cit.* (ref.8), pp.143-144.

24. Lee, J.-Y. (2001), *op. cit.* (ref.22), p.44.

targeted essentially at the unemployed. They are complemented by manpower banks in each of the seven major cities: these have booths for each of a number of broad occupational groups, conduct psychometric tests, provide vocational counselling, and run group sessions. There are also 16 job-search centres for daily jobs, 142 employment offices run by the provinces and municipalities (mainly for public works programmes and daily workers), and 22 training information centres run by the Human Resource Development Service of Korea.

27. The staff of the public employment security centres, manpower banks and job-search centres for daily jobs include nearly 2,000 vocational counsellors.²⁵ All are on renewable one-year contracts; around three-quarters are women. There are concerns about morale and the quality of the service ethic among some of the counsellors: steps are currently being taken to improve both staff and customer satisfaction, as well as effectiveness. Many of the counsellors were recruited soon after the economic crisis, largely on the basis of a knowledge-based qualification test set up as part of the National Technical Qualification Test System: passes could be achieved after a course of 1-3 months run by private training institutions. Nearly 27% of vocational counsellors in the public employment security centres currently have this qualification²⁶, but around 20,000 people have now passed the test, so it no longer has much market value, particularly as in some of the employment services it is preferred but not mandatory. Currently a 'grade 2' test is being introduced for those who have passed the basic test and have acquired five years' experience. Short one-week courses are also run by the Ministry of Labour for recruits on entry and after one year: these are concerned mainly with administrative matters, though the second one includes some career guidance theory. There are plans afoot to move towards a more professional structure of bachelor and master's degrees, possibly linked to training for HRD professionals and industrial trainers: a few universities are developing courses of this kind, but as yet they have no official status.

28. The vocational counsellors see all unemployed clients for a diagnostic interview; those who are assessed as requiring vocational training to improve their employability are given further counselling, including some aptitude/interest tests, to ensure that the training selected is appropriate to their needs. In addition, the vocational counsellors may run one-week courses on job-seeking skills, and offer personal support to those going for job interviews.

29. The main information resources within the public employment services are developed by the Work Information Centre of the Korea Human Resource Development Service. These include: occupational classifications and statistics; the KNOW (Korea Network for Occupations and Workers) system of occupational profiles covering worker interests, skills, aptitudes and other requirements, plus salaries and prospects (to be completed in 2003)²⁷; and occupational outlook data (*Korean Job Future*, revised every two years) comprising five-year forecasts based on extensive employment surveys. The latter publication is sent to schools and universities, along with other creative resources including a booklet on occupations as represented in the cinema, and a job game developed for use in elementary schools (further versions for junior high and senior high schools are being developed). No data seem to be available, however, on how these resources are used in the education system, and links with this system seem to be limited. The Work Information Centre also develops psychometric tests and other guidance resources.

30. A key resource developed by the centre is the Work-Net website. It provides individuals with access to job vacancies, and employers with access to job searchers, as well as holding a wide range of occupational and labour market information and data on publicly-subsidised training courses; in addition, it

25. Questionnaire response, section 6.2.

26. Figure supplied by Ministry of Labour.

27. This is based on the O*NET system in the USA.

offers on-line test administration and on-line counselling services (largely information-oriented).²⁸ It is one of the 100 most-visited websites in Korea, with around 140,000 users per day. The job vacancies listed are estimated to have grown from around 4% to around 10-15% of advertised vacancies; the aim is to increase this to 30%.²⁹ Since the public employment services are targeted mainly at the weaker members of society these tend to be less highly qualified jobs, but other jobs advertised in daily newspapers etc. can be viewed in another part of the website. Accordingly, WorkNet is widely used by employed people who are thinking of changing jobs as well as by the unemployed.

4.4 Community-based services

31. A network of youth counselling services has been established by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. It comprises regional offices in each of the 16 provinces, plus 118 youth counselling centres which are funded by the municipalities. Their target group is aged 9-24, and they offer counselling services on a wide variety of personal and social problems, including career issues. The aims of the service include 'instilling a sense of morality and spirituality in our youth'. Around half of clients are referred by schools and other organisations; the other half come on a self-referral basis (the referrals include more boys; the self-referrals more girls). Most are seen individually, but there is also some group counselling: in all, around 355,000 young people were seen by the centres in the most recent six-month period.³⁰ About 10-15% of the issues they deal with are career guidance issues, particularly relating to choice of college major (choice of institution and other information-based issues are left for schools to cover). Especially where there are conflicts in this respect between students and parents, some centres like the parents to come too. Extensive use is made of aptitude and interest tests.

32. Complementing these services is a Cyber Youth Counselling Centre run by the Korea Youth Counselling Institute which includes a 'problem-solving encyclopaedia' (a database of around 6,000 cases), message-board counselling (where users can post messages, share their problems with one another and work together to solve their problems), e-mail counselling, and chat-room counselling which includes a videocounselling facility (all the cybercounsellors are equipped with a web-cam; although it is used only rarely at present, partly because not many clients have this facility, it is viewed as offering potential for future development). Of the concerns raised by cybercounselling clients, 6% are career problems. The institute also runs a telephone counselling service: there are plans to have a single national number for this service, with calls being routed to the local youth counselling centres.

33. A national certification system for youth counsellors is currently being implemented, with three levels: one for those with bachelor degrees in related areas (psychology, education, social welfare); a second for those with master's degrees or three years' experience; and a third for those with doctorates or five years' further experience. Tasks of increasing responsibility are defined for each level. All counsellors are on renewable one-year contracts. Female counsellors outnumber male counsellors by more than two to one.

34. Another extensive though less strongly co-ordinated network of community-based services is the network of women's centres. There are around a hundred of these, some funded by national government and some by the provinces. In addition to providing social centres, they may run education and training

28. Around 10,000 people per year use this on-line counselling service. It is viewed by senior staff as a 'hook' to get them to visit centres rather than as a primary service delivery vehicle.

29. Figures provided to the review team by Work Information Centre senior staff.

30. This and much of the other information in this paragraph were provided to the review team by the Korea Youth Counselling Institute.

courses, and offer career information and counselling services. The centre visited by the review team, Kyonggi Women's Development Centre, is widely viewed as a 'beacon centre' in the latter respects. Alongside its training courses, it offers assistance for women who want to set up their own business (including 'incubator' facilities), and runs one-week career planning courses for unemployed women and for single mothers, as well as providing web-based and face-to-face career guidance services which include testing programmes and a job-placement service. Its web-based services include databases on educational courses, child-care facilities, women experts, and companies with women as chief executives: it was built by women employed through a public-works programme. Among the staff of the centre are several people with social-welfare and counselling qualifications. A short course (one day per month for five months) on career guidance is being run by KRIVET for staff from this and other women's centres in the province, but it does not currently lead to any certification.

35. KRIVET itself has a Career Development Centre which offers a limited direct guidance service alongside its substantial research and development functions. The latter include research projects, the development of psychometric test instruments and of career education curriculum programmes, and servicing training courses for guidance professionals run by other organisations, as well as the development and management of CareerNet, an extensive on-line career information and guidance system. CareerNet is designed as a career development system, based on similar principles to the US DISCOVER and SIGI-Plus systems; it is customised to a range of different users, from elementary-school students to adults³¹; it includes not only databases of occupations and education/training opportunities but also aptitude and interest tests which are completed by around 90% of users; and it also incorporates a web-based counselling service in which questions can be placed on a message-board and answered either publicly or privately. Another useful facility is a listing of career counselling services, by area. Much of the occupational information is adapted from the Work Information Centre's WorkNet (para.30); it is supported by short video-clips.

36. The KRIVET centre's career counselling service is currently limited: it is staffed by two career counsellors on renewable short-term contracts who each spend one-third of their time on research work and two-thirds on career counselling; they each usually see one adult client a day, as well as doing some group counselling with school students and responding to the questions presented to the web-based service. The original plan was for the centre to be a model which could later be replicated in each of the provinces, providing a resource centre for schools as well as a place where both young people and adults could go for independent career counselling. This plan has been on hold for some time, though the Ministry of Education official at the seminar held as part of the review team's visit indicated that funding had now been put aside to implement it.

37. Services for the disabled are co-ordinated by the Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled. It is funded from the levy charged to employers who fail to employ at least 2% of disabled people within their labour force. It has a number of branch offices and works closely with a number of affiliated organisations. It offers a variety of career guidance and information services, including web-based services for those who cannot easily move about. Opportunities for disabled people still tend to be limited, partly because of the stigma that tends to be attached to disabilities in Korean culture.

38. There are also a number of voluntary organisations which include career guidance and placement services in their range of services. These include religious organisations, the YMCA and employers'

31. The review team was told that 89% of current CareerNet registrants were school students, 6% were higher education students, and 4% were adults.

federations. Thus, for example, 36 manpower banks for older workers have been set up in a variety of organisations including YMCA, Korean Elderly Association centres and social welfare centres.³²

4.5 The private sector

39. Most of the services available in the private sector are placement-oriented. They charge individual users and/or employers for their services: a common model in the case of those employment agencies offering a job-brokerage service is to provide the service free of charge to individuals but to charge the employers 10-30% of the starting annual salary for a successful placement. In all, there are currently 3,592 registered for-profit job-search agencies.³³

40. Some large international companies operating in Korea have career development services for their employees: these include companies like Citibank, Hewlett-Packard, IBM and Motorola. Most Korean-owned companies, however, have few if any services of this kind. Companies with over 1,000 employees are legally obliged to invest at least 2% of their payroll in vocational training; if they fail to do so, they pay the balance as a training levy. There is little evidence as yet, however, of companies establishing career development reviews and other guidance processes to support such programmes, or as part of such programmes.

41. A number of companies are now hiring the services of outplacement agencies to help people displaced as a result of corporate restructuring to find another job or set up businesses of their own. This trend is supported by government subsidies for such services, which can cover half of the costs in the case of small and medium-sized organisations, and one-third in the case of large organisations.

42. In terms of information resources, the private sector appears to be particularly active in relation to resources on college entrance.

5. KEY POLICY ISSUES

5.1 Schools and higher education

43. Current guidance provision within schools seems to focus largely on college entrance as an end in itself, rather than as a means to an end. Research undertaken by KRIVET indicates that the main reason for choosing a college major is its relevance to the occupation the student wishes to pursue, but that students show little awareness of careers or concern for career planning³⁴; it is accordingly unlikely that the career preferences are based on any serious career exploration. The guidance process seems to pay little attention to addressing this issue: instead it is preoccupied with the tactics of gaining college entry. By the

32. Questionnaire response, section 5.4.

33. Questionnaire response, section 9.8.

34. Han, S.-G., Jin, M.-S., Lee, Y.-D., Lim, E., Lee, J.-Y., Lee, Y.-G. & Jung, Y.-K. (2001), The study on the career plan of high school students. In *Research Abstracts 2001*, pp.106-109. Seoul: KRIVET.

same token, it seems likely that the needs of those entering the labour market immediately are relatively neglected.

44. If career education is to provide a basis for lifelong learning, linked to lifelong career development, then it needs to be implemented more systematically and on a mandatory rather than optional basis, distinguished more clearly from vocational education.³⁵ The review team was encouraged to hear from the Ministry of Education that it was planning to move in these directions, and to introduce career education into elementary schools too, so that it can build developmentally from career awareness (elementary school), through career exploration (junior high school), into career preparation (senior high school). A framework for such a curriculum has already been developed by KRIVET.³⁶

45. The notion of career education being mandatory is not inconsistent with the process of decentralisation, under which administrative powers have been transferred from the national government to provincial governments and individual schools (para.12). Provinces and schools can still be allowed considerable latitude within the national framework. It is however important that there should be national monitoring of career education and guidance programmes. At present, no overview of current practice exists, but some national data collection is being conducted, via the provinces, later this year. Such monitoring needs to be conducted on a regular basis in the future. It would also be helpful if KRIVET could be asked to do some work on measuring the outcomes from career education programmes.

46. Within the 7th School Curriculum (para.16), more systematic attention needs to be paid to raising school principals' awareness of the nature and importance of career education, and to training the teachers responsible for delivering it. Teaching career education makes very different demands from teaching traditional school subjects. To assume that teachers can teach it without specific training is as mistaken as it would be in other areas of the curriculum, and is likely to produce poor-quality programmes that will lack credibility with students and fail to impact upon their career learning.

47. Steps also need to be taken to improve the opportunities for students to experience the world of work before making educational choices which may have substantial career implications. Opportunities for exploratory work visits, work shadowing and work experience need to be substantially expanded. This will require stronger structures for school-industry collaboration. If universities and colleges were to give credit for such experiences in their entrance selection procedures, as is currently the case with community service, this would greatly enhance the status of such career learning.

48. Clearer standards are needed for the role of the school counsellor, including the ratio of counsellors to students, the maximum amount of time that counsellors should be expected to teach, and the training required to perform the role. The training provided at present is limited in comparison to parallel roles in other OECD countries. Consideration should be given to developing a stronger legal framework which would incorporate these standards.

35. There is a conceptual tendency in Korea to subsume career education within vocational education. This carries the risk that it will be seen as relevant to students on vocational courses but not to those on general courses. The confusion is evident, for example, in a KRIVET report which defines vocational education as including education which enables the student to 'explore the world of work', to 'choose an occupation', and to 'support wise decision-making about one's career', as well as the more specific vocational education purpose of enabling the individual to 'develop and acquire knowledge, skills and attitude that the chosen occupation demands' (KRIVET (2001), *Vocational Education System in Korea*, p.1. Seoul).

36. Chang, S.-M. (2001), Construction of objective and content criteria for career education in Korea. In *Research Abstracts 2001*, p.189. Seoul: KRIVET.

49. In addition, attention is needed to the management of guidance programmes in schools. At present, it seems, there is not always effective co-ordination between the school counsellor, the work of the homeroom teachers, the career education curriculum, and other elements of the guidance programme.

50. As part of this process, greater clarity is needed about the relationships of schools to the various resources available to them at provincial level. These include the provincial office of education's Education and Science Research Institute, the public employment services, and the youth counselling services (para.18). Currently there seems to be little if any contact between these bodies. There is also now a proposal to set up career development centres at provincial level, based on the model set up within KRIVET (para.36). Before this latter proposal is implemented, it seems highly desirable to review the relationships with schools of these various agencies, to explore how their respective forms of support might be more effectively harmonised, and to plan at both national and provincial levels for increased co-ordination of school and non-school-based resources for career guidance.

51. Within this issue lies the strategic question of whether career guidance services should be offered to school students largely from within the school, with some limited external support; or whether they should be based, as in some other countries (e.g. the UK), on a dual model of provision, with the guidance services within the school being complemented by external agencies. The arguments for the latter model include its potentially closer links with the labour market and the fact that its guidance can be independent and impartial. Thus it was pointed out to the review team that the rationale for career development centres on the KRIVET model was that they would not be as biased towards college entry as school-based services tended to be. This question needs to be addressed with some urgency: the answer to it will influence the scale and nature of the proposed new service.

52. In most universities and colleges, career development services tend to be limited, falling in the cracks between the counselling services and the job information services. Inspections are regularly carried out of higher education institutions, looking at the number of staff in the job information services, the usage of them by students, and the employment rate. There seems to be a good case for extending such inspections to cover career development services in broader terms, including opportunities for career counselling, for career education, and for work-experience internships. Universities and colleges should also be encouraged to explore possibilities for developing their job information centres into career development centres, enlarging their functions, and upgrading the professional training of their staff.

5.2 Public employment services

53. The public employment services have developed very rapidly in the wake of the economic crisis of 1997-98, and there are concerns about their quality. At present there is a wide range of centres with overlapping purposes (para.26): there would seem to be merit in exploring possibilities for merging or at least rationalising them. There is also a need to improve the employment security of staff (see para.62 below), to permit those trained as vocational counsellors to spend more time on counselling and less on administrative tasks, and to avoid staff turnover due to unnecessary job transfers.³⁷

54. A key policy issue for the future is the extent to which the public employment services should provide more extensively for all job-seekers and career changers, rather than focusing so strongly on the unemployed. The WorkNet website and its associated services are designed as universal services; the face-to-face services in the various employment centres, however, are aimed at unemployed people, even though some of the resources they contain could be of interest to wider groups. Potentially, the centres could be a valuable instrument for encouraging those in jobs to explore possibilities for raising their skills

37. See questionnaire response, sections 2.3 and 3.5.

and for changing jobs, thus promoting lifelong learning and a dynamic labour market. This would, though, require them to be redesigned to attract a wider clientele. They might also be moved into a government agency structure, at one remove from direct government control, thus encouraging them to become more customer-focused. With unemployment currently at a much lower level than in recent years (para.6), this seems a good time to examine such options.

55. Within such a review, attention will be needed to the level of the universal service that should be provided. In the redesigned centres, much of the service could be based on access to web-based services and other resources, with some limited personal support. Whether there should also be free access to vocational counselling is an open question; an alternative would be to provide information on services in the voluntary and private sectors, including fee-charged services (see para.59 below). In addition, there could be a case for exploring the possibility of a callcentre to provide telephone counselling which would complement web-based services used at a distance: present telephone services are limited to recorded messages regarding local job vacancies, but telephone counselling has been used effectively in other spheres in Korea (see e.g. para.32) and there seems no reason why it should not be effective here too.

56. There is also an argument for expanding the targeted employment services to particular groups, including vulnerable young people, people with disabilities (cf. para.37), and older workers. The latter group is particularly important in view of the ageing of the population (para.9): work has been done on identifying occupations which are particularly suited to older workers, and to providing government subsidies for employing them, but these need to be supported by guidance services adapted to their needs, building on the manpower banks that have already been developed (para.38).

5.3 Other services for adults

57. Despite the lifelong learning rhetoric about the importance of supporting workers' voluntary efforts to develop their vocational competency throughout life (para.8), there are still few signs of systematic processes to provide such support. Few employers have developed career development reviews and other guidance processes (para.40); services in the community-based sector tend to be addressed to those entering the labour market – young people (paras.31-33) and women returners (para.34) – and those leaving it (para.38); and services in the private sector tend to be placement-oriented (para.39).

58. The extent of potential demand for career counselling services among employed adults is currently unclear. The short-term nature of many employment contracts (para.5) and the volatility of the labour market would suggest substantial need for such services. But the extent to which need is translated into demand may be limited at present by the unfamiliarity of the concept, by it being viewed as an activity for school students rather than for adults, and by the feminised nature of the emerging career guidance profession (see para.62 below).

59. If career guidance is to support lifelong learning, a strategy for extending it to employed adults is essential. It is suggested that ways of achieving it might be an agenda item for the strategic discussions proposed in Section 5.5 below. The role of employers and trade unions and of the voluntary and private sectors, as well as of the public employment services (Section 5.2), should be considered as part of these discussions.

5.4 Professional issues

60. Career counsellors in Korea often seem to have high levels of educational qualifications, but not necessarily to have had substantial training designed to develop their specific competencies in the career guidance field. Master's degrees in counselling, for example, may include at most one or two courses in

career development. Moreover, it seems not uncommon for roles to be allocated to people with little or no specific training: this is the case, for example, with some school counsellors (para.13) and also for the staff of job information centres in higher education (para.20). There seems to be a lack of a national certification system for career counsellors along the lines of that for youth counsellors (para.33): such a system needs to be developed. The plans for a more professional structure of relevant bachelor and master's degree on career counselling, possibly linked to training for HRD professionals and industrial trainers (para.27), seems a promising development in this respect. Alongside such developments it might be helpful to explore the possibility of developing a national competence framework which is able to embrace a variety of roles in different sectors: the *Vocational Counsellor's Training Manual* recently developed by KRIVET could provide a useful running start to this process. Such a framework could also make it easier to move across sectors, and so could provide a stronger basis for career progression for guidance professionals.

61. If a cross-sectoral competence framework is to be developed, stronger collaboration will be required between the various professional associations in the field. There are currently at least four such associations: the Korea Vocational Counselling Association (mainly for vocational counsellors in the public employment services), the Korea Career Education Association (mainly for school counsellors and career education teachers), the Association of Job Information Centres at the Higher Education Level, and the Korea Career Counselling Society (mainly for people working in universities and in research institutes). Currently, links between them appear to be limited. If the career guidance field is to develop on a lifelong basis, stronger links will be essential. It would be helpful if a regular professional forum could be established, possibly leading towards some kind of federal structure.

62. Attention is also needed to the terms of employment of career guidance practitioners. Outside the education system, most are on renewable one-year contracts, with modest salaries. This is evident, for example, in the public employment services (para.27), the youth counselling services (para.33), and KRIVET's career guidance service (para.36). The effect is that while these services contain many highly-qualified women, it is difficult to attract men to them. But a gender balance is desirable, both for equity reasons and to attract men to use career counselling services (cf. para.58). It accordingly seems important to explore the possibility of raising both the employment security and salaries for such work, at least after a period of competent performance.

63. The rationale for the direct guidance service within KRIVET's Career Development Centre (para.36) seems to have been partly to provide a model service which might be emulated elsewhere and partly to act as a laboratory for the centre's research and development work. If the model is now to be replicated, possibly in an adapted form, at provincial level, then the laboratory rationale needs to be strengthened in order to justify the continuation of the service.

5.5 Co-ordination and strategic leadership

64. If there is to be a coherent strategy for career guidance in support of lifelong learning, much closer links are needed between the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Ministry of Labour. There will always be some tensions between the views of the two ministries on such issues, but these can be creative tensions, and the active involvement of both is essential. A clearer mechanism is required for co-ordination between key officials of the two ministries on career-guidance-related policy development. At ministerial level, the review team was told that a high-level HRD committee including both ministers has been established, but has not so far discussed issues related to career guidance and information. If the individual is to be at the heart of the HRD strategy (para.8), then such issues need to be placed on this committee's agenda. The review team wishes respectfully to suggest that this present Country Note might be used as a briefing paper for such a discussion.

65. Closer links are also desirable between KRIVET and the Work Information Centre. Both are outstanding centres by international standards, but the currently limited nature of contact between them – and the tendencies towards competition rather than collaboration, despite their different briefs – limits their effectiveness. For example, the Work Information Centre has produced some important and creative resources for use in schools (para.29). But it knows little about how they are used, and in their design little account seems to have been taken of the nature of guidance programmes in schools. Co-operation with KRIVET could enable more effective use to be made of such resources, encouraging links with curriculum and other programmes. Again, such co-operation could enable stronger information to be developed on the relationship between educational courses and occupational opportunities. An inter-agency agreement, identifying areas of potential collaboration and procedures for such collaboration, might be helpful in these respects.

66. Links between the two relevant ministries, the provincial authorities, the two research organisations, the relevant professional associations (para.61) and other key bodies also need to be strengthened to ensure that there are more effective links between policy, research and practice. It is significant that at the seminar organised as part of the review team visit (para.1), several participants indicated that it was the first time that such a cross-sectoral event involving many of these parties had been held, and how valuable it had been. Interest was expressed in holding another such meeting to discuss the suggestions in this Country Note. The review team would strongly support this proposal, particularly if the membership could be extended to cover representatives of employers and trade unions. One of the suggestions which the meeting might examine is the desirability of establishing a regular forum of this kind, to review progress, explore possibilities for cross-sectoral collaboration, and provide strategic leadership for the field as a whole – possibly with the two research bodies alternating as hosts/secretariats for the forum.

6. CONCLUSIONS

67. The strengths of the career guidance system in Korea include:

- The extent and quality of ICT-based guidance delivery.
- The extent and quality of the labour market information provided by the Korea Human Resource Development Service's Work Information Centre.
- The high educational level of many career guidance practitioners.
- The extent and quality of the work in the career guidance field of two major research and development institutes (KRIVET and the Work Information Centre).

68. The weaknesses of the system include:

- The narrow focus of school guidance on college entrance, and the lack of opportunities for work experience within general courses in the education system.
- The lack of career guidance services for employed adults.

- The limited nature of training provision for career counsellors, and – outside the education system – their lack of job security.
- The lack of cross-sectoral bodies and of strategic leadership in the career guidance field.

69. The suggestions in this report have been designed to build on the strengths of the system and to address its weaknesses.

APPENDIX 1: OECD REVIEW TEAM

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APPENDIX 2: REVIEW VISIT PROGRAMME

Monday 5 August

- 09:30 – 11:00 Initial briefing from National Co-ordinator for the review
- 11:30 – 14:00 Meeting with President of Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET)
- 14:00 – 15:30 Meeting at Ministry of Education with key policy-makers
- 16:30 – 17:45 Meeting at Ministry of Labour with key policy-makers

Tuesday 6 August

- 10:00 – 14:00 Visit to Work Information Center of the Human Resource Development Service of Korea, Seoul
- 15:00 – 17:00 Visit to a job information centre in a higher education institution (Ewha Woman's University, Seoul)

Wednesday 7 August

- 10:45 – 12:30 Visit to Dodang High School, Bucheon
- 14:30 – 16:15 Visit to KyungKi Centre for Women's Development, KyungKi
- 18:00 – 19:15 Visit to KangNam Employment Service Centre, Seoul

Thursday 8 August

- 10:00 – 13:30 Visit to KRIVET Career Development Centre, Seoul
- 14:00 – 18.15 Seminar with key policy-makers, researchers and career guidance professionals

Friday 9 August

- 10:00 – 10:30 Discussion with KRIVET staff on human resource development in companies
- 11:30 – 13:00 Visit to Korea Youth Counselling Institute, Seoul
- 13:00 – 15:00 Final debriefing with National Co-ordinator

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestion/recommendation	See para(s).
Implement career education more systematically within the school curriculum, and on a mandatory rather than optional basis	44
Regularly monitor school career education and guidance programmes at national level	45
Ask KRIVET to conduct some research work on measuring the outcomes from career education programmes	45
Pay more systematic attention to raising school principals' awareness of the nature and importance of career education, and to training the teachers responsible for delivering it	46
Improve the opportunities for school students to experience the world of work before making educational choices which may have substantial career implications; develop stronger structures for school-industry collaboration to support such activities; encourage universities and colleges to give credit to such career learning experiences in their entrance selection procedures, as they currently do in relation to community service	47
Develop clearer standards for the role of the school counsellor, including the ratio of counsellors to students, the maximum amount of time that counsellors should be expected to teach, and the training required to perform the role; develop a stronger legal framework to incorporate these standards	48
Pay greater attention to the management of guidance programmes in schools, co-ordinating their various parts	49
Review the relationships of schools to the various resources available to them at provincial level; clarify whether this represents a move towards a dual model of provision at school level, and if so, the principles on which this model should be based; plan at both national and provincial levels for increased co-ordination of school and non-school-based resources for career guidance	50-51
Extend inspections of higher education institutions to cover career development services in broader terms than at present	52
Encourage universities and colleges to explore possibilities for developing their job information centres into career development centres, enlarging their functions, and upgrading the professional training of their staff	52

Explore possibilities for merging or rationalising the current range of public employment services	53
Permit public employment service staff trained as vocational counsellors to spend more time on counselling and less on administrative tasks, and avoid staff turnover due to unnecessary job transfers.	53
Review the possibility of extending the public employment services to cater more broadly for all job-seekers and career changers, rather than focusing so strongly on the unemployed; this might include redesigning the employment centres to attract a wider clientele, and setting up a callcentre to provide telephone counselling alongside the present web-based services	54-55
Explore possibilities for moving the public employment services into a government agency structure, at one remove from direct government control, thus encouraging them to become more customer-focused	54
Expanding targeted employment services to vulnerable young people, to people with disabilities, and to older workers	56
Develop a strategy for extending career guidance services for employed adults	57-59
Develop a national certification system for career counsellors	60
Explore the possibility of developing a national competence framework to embrace a variety of career guidance roles in different sectors, as a basis for harmonising such provision and making it easier to move across sectors	60
Establish stronger collaboration between the main professional association in the career guidance field, through a regular professional forum, possibly leading towards a federal structure	61
Improve the employment security and salaries for career guidance practitioners in the public employment services and community-based services	53, 62
If KRIVET's Career Development Centre is to be maintained, strengthen its laboratory rationale	63
Establish a clearer mechanism for co-ordination between key officials of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Ministry of Labour on career-guidance-related policy development	64
Place career guidance and information on the agenda of the high-level HRD committee which spans the two ministries; use the present OECD Country Note as a briefing paper for this discussion	64
Establish an inter-agency agreement between KRIVET and the Korea Human Resource Development Service's Work Information Centre, identifying areas of potential collaboration and procedures for such collaboration	65
Organise a further meeting of those who attended the seminar held as part of the OECD review to discuss the suggestions in this Country Note; extend the	66

membership of the group to include representatives of employers and trade unions

Explore the desirability of establishing a regular cross-sectoral forum to review progress, explore possibilities for cross-sectoral collaboration, and provide strategic leadership for the field as a whole – possibly with KRIVET and the Work Information Centre alternating as hosts/secretariats for the forum

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