

SUMMARY

Career guidance plays a key role in helping labour markets work and education systems meet their goals. It also promotes equity: recent evidence suggests that social mobility relies on wider acquisition not just of knowledge and skills, but of an understanding about how to use them. In this context, the mission of career guidance is widening, to become part of lifelong learning. Already, services are starting to adapt, departing from a traditional model of a psychology-led occupation interviewing students about to leave school.

One key challenge for this changing service is to move from helping students decide on a job or a course, to the broader development of career management skills. For schools, this means building career education into the curriculum and linking it to students' overall development. A number of countries have integrated it into school subjects. However, career education remains concentrated around the end of compulsory schooling. In upper secondary and tertiary education, services focus on immediate choices rather than personal development and wider decision making, although this too is starting to change in some countries.

A second challenge is to make career guidance more widely available throughout adulthood. Such provision is underdeveloped, and used mainly by unemployed people accessing public employment services. Some new services are being linked to adult education institutions, but these are not always capable of offering wide and impartial advice. Efforts to create private markets have enjoyed limited success, yet public provision lacks sufficient funding. Thus creation of career services capable of serving all adults remains a daunting task. Web-based services may help with supply, but these cannot fully substitute for tailored help to individuals.