



# Developing a holistic system of lifelong guidance: Perspectives from career experts

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# Introduction

- There is a strong consensus that a lifelong guidance system offers the most effective way to organise career guidance services.
- Despite investment, it remains that most EU countries have not yet succeeded in establishing coherent and holistic lifelong guidance systems.
- Efforts to improve such systems are long-term and evolve in response to surrounding political, economic and social conditions, but...

**How do career development experts experience these improvements and changes?**



# Aim of the study

- Explored how international career development experts perceive the development of lifelong guidance systems
- Aim was to identify and describe variation of conceptions of the phenomenon

## Research questions:

1. What are career experts' conceptions of systems development in lifelong guidance?
2. What are the critical aspects that differentiate the qualitatively varying ways of systems development in lifelong guidance?



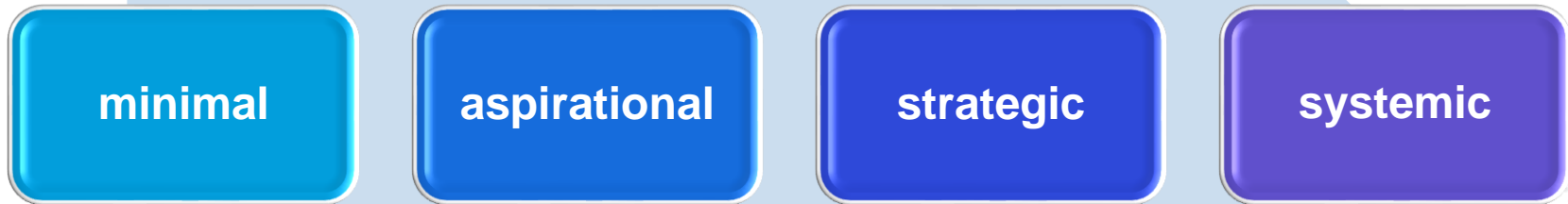
# Methods and data

- Phenomenographic approach
- Interviews with 30 career development experts from 18 countries (comprising 13 EU member states, Australia, Iceland, Switzerland, the UK and the USA)
- Represented broad career guidance community
- Interviews sought to explore experiences, understandings and conceptions of how lifelong guidance systems develop, the elements of effective systems and how systems might evolve in the future
- Extended summary with verbatim quote were analysed



# Results

Four distinct categories reflecting career experts' conceptions of systems development in lifelong guidance



Kettunen, J., Barnes, S-A., Bimrose, J., Brown, A. & Vuorinen, R. (2023). Career experts' conceptions of systems development in lifelong guidance, *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-023-09595-x>



# Dimensions of variation experienced

**Legislation** – rules for regulating and managing service provision, entitlements, qualifications and national accountability of services

**Strategic leadership** – refers to how policy and systems for LLG are managed in a country, region, and locality

**Cooperation** – focuses on the mechanisms that support communication, service delivery and knowledge sharing between the various stakeholders

**Delivery** – models of delivery, differentiated practice and widening access

**Professionalisation** – workforce professionalism and professional identity

**Evidence of impact** – measuring, monitoring, evaluating and improving services

<b>DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>			
	<b>minimal</b>	<b>aspirational</b>	<b>strategic</b>	<b>systemic</b>
<b>Legislation</b>	Non-existent	Nominal	Embedded in other policies	Explicit
<b>Strategic leadership</b>	Missing	Scattered	Devolved	Shared
<b>Cooperation</b>	Lacking	Emerging	Multilateral	Multisectoral
<b>Delivery</b>	Limited	Fragmented	Vertically coordinated	Horizontally coordinated
<b>Professionalisation</b>	Resistant	Aspirational	Partial	Regulated
<b>Evidence of impact</b>	Not evaluated	Desired	Ad hoc	Systematic

DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION	CATEGORIES	
	minimal	
Legislation	Non-existent	<p><i>We don't have any policy or any law that works on lifelong guidance.</i></p> <p><i>There is no overarching strategy or policy.</i></p> <p><i>Career guidance is avoided as a policy term.</i></p> <p><i>Coordination ... to be honest, I do not see that.</i></p> <p><i>A lack of cooperation between key ministries made development of a system difficult.</i></p>
Strategic leadership	Missing	
Cooperation	Lacking	
Delivery	Limited	
Professionalisation	Resistant	
Evidence of impact	Not evaluated	

DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION	CATEGORIES	
	aspirational	
Legislation	Nominal	<p><i>... policies may be introduced, but they are not integrated or regulated.</i></p> <p><i>This [cooperation] remains problematic, perhaps because of the vested interests of different stakeholder groups.</i></p> <p><i>There are many relevant initiatives and attempts to move towards delivery of lifelong guidance, but these are invariably fragmented and not organised, nothing is institutionalised.</i></p> <p><i>Right now, we have a patchwork system because we have different centres that are organised at different levels.</i></p>
Strategic leadership	Scattered	
Cooperation	Emerging	
Delivery	Fragmented	
Professionalisation	Aspirational	
Evidence of impact	Desired	

DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION	CATEGORIES	
	<b>strategic</b>	<i>Instead of separate laws for different service providers, there should be one body of legislation that governs the main service providers.</i>
<b>Legislation</b>	Embedded in other policies	
<b>Strategic leadership</b>	Devolved	<i>Under [the leadership of] several individual ministries, the core, idea of lifelong guidance may be lost.</i>
<b>Cooperation</b>	Multilateral	
<b>Delivery</b>	Vertically coordinated	<i>In [some] contexts there is no evidence base, and although feedback from the unemployed is often positive, there is no systematic evaluation...it can be ad hoc.</i>
<b>Professionalisation</b>	Partial	
<b>Evidence of impact</b>	Ad hoc	<i>The weakness is that each system of measuring is unique to one organisation ... there is no comparability.</i>

DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION	CATEGORIES	
	systemic	
Legislation	Explicit	<i>The national legislation provides a basis for system development. In principle, the legislation acknowledges the features of a systemic approach to guidance.</i>
Strategic leadership	Shared	<i>Lifelong guidance is now better implemented in national and regional policies.</i>
Cooperation	Multisectoral	<i>...system is strengthened by allowing stakeholders and providers to support each other through mutual learning.</i>
Delivery	Horizontally coordinated	<i>The national cooperation group coordinates services and ensures their availability.</i>
Professionalisation	Regulated	<i>Cross-sectoral service delivery is required by legislation</i>
Evidence of impact	Systematic	<i>... the new service includes one-stop centres based on cross-disciplinary approach.</i>

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# An ideal system?

- Legislation – **explicit** legislation creates a foundation for establishing a lifelong guidance system
- Strategic leadership – recognised shift to strategic **shared** leadership in developed lifelong guidance system
- Cooperation – when expanded to **multilateral** and **multisectoral** the benefits of such a cooperative system is one that is transparent and coordinated
- Delivery – a **coherent delivery** system can be seen to be developed, which, for the individual, provides seamless support (i.e., delivery is multi-channelled, personalised and addressing social and economic needs of an individual)
- Professionalisation – **regulation** defining practitioner qualifications and competency standards
- Evidence of impact – **systematic collection** of a range of qualitative and quantitative data to provide evidence to adapt services and provide opportunities to learn



# Conclusion

- Lifelong guidance can be described both as
  - an individual right that guarantees access to a good life
  - a soft policy instrument and a mechanism for the wider transformation of society
- No single service provider or sector alone can respond to increasing demands on guidance
- Development of lifelong guidance services requires a shift away from the traditional services of experts towards transdisciplinary collaboration
- Establish networks, jointly agree policies and a division of labour amongst different service providers in education, employment, youth and social sectors
- Critical to secure consistent political support and wider stakeholder participation



# References

Kettunen, J., Barnes, S-A., et al. (2023). *Career experts' conceptions of systems development in lifelong guidance. International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-023-09595-x>

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# Thank you



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