

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Warwick
Unit of Assessment: Business and Management Studies
Title of case study: Labour Market Information
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Pathways that individuals navigate through education, training and employment are becoming ever more complex and high quality labour market information (LMI) is crucial for careers advice and in informing decisions about where to invest in skills training. Research undertaken by Bimrose, with Brown, Barnes and Hughes has resulted in new policy frameworks for systems design and delivery of careers services; and has informed professional development in careers policy, research and practice. Internationally, the Institute for Employment Research (IER) at Warwick has informed and shaped policy debate and practice on career development services in response to political, economic, technological and social changes.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>High quality LMI is needed to improve the efficiency of labour markets by understanding the supply and demand for different skills. Research carried out by Jenny Bimrose and colleagues at IER from 2003 – 2013 provided evidence of the need for high quality LMI for effective career guidance practice; contributed to the design of practical ICT solutions to address this need; and continues to inform policy and practice debates about the centrality of LMI for career development.</p> <p><i>Role of LMI in career guidance and individual development</i></p> <p>The principal researcher was Jenny Bimrose, supported by Sally-Anne Barnes, both employed by IER throughout the period. The first phase of research relates to an internationally unique qualitative, longitudinal case study in England (2003–2008), which explored the effectiveness of career guidance by analysing data from interviews with 50 adults tracked over a five year period. Funded by the [then] Department for Education and Skills, it was the first example of a study that tracked career trajectories over time to evaluate the role career guidance in individual development and progression. Fifty adults were followed up over a five year period, with new knowledge produced that emphasised the high value placed by clients on access to high quality LMI. This phase of work was continued with two other research grants examining individual career progression across Europe (2010 – 2011) and career adaptability in England and Norway (2011 – 2012). These studies involved Deirdre Hughes, an IER Associate Fellow.</p> <p><i>Development of Information and Communication Technologies supporting the use of LMI</i></p> <p>Findings from these studies were extended during the second phase of research, funded by a European Framework 7 project (MATURE, 2008-2012). An important focus was on developing information and communications technologies (ICT) to support knowledge transfer amongst careers guidance practitioners in their use of labour market information (LMI) with clients. A more general aim was to facilitate knowledge maturation processes in the career guidance community more widely. A key assumption underpinning the project was that individual learning processes are linked to organisational learning in a ‘knowledge-maturing process’, during which knowledge continually changes in nature. This knowledge can take many forms (e.g., related to work tasks or processes) and tools were developed to support the processes of knowledge maturation and transfer (e.g. website to support expertise development in organisations: http://soboleodemo.knowledge-maturing.com/).</p> <p>The research process involved on-going dialogue with policy makers and careers service managers about the changing nature of careers, how the careers sector could harness knowledge of labour markets and embed this at a grass roots level and what changes in practitioner knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes are required to support innovation in practice. The knowledge maturation processes discussed with key partners (Connexions services in Northumberland and Kent) were useful in scoping the nature of challenges the profession faced and developing technologically-enhanced solutions (including the subsequent development of two online learning modules, one on LMI and one on STEM: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/ngf together with a three country ‘LMI Concordat’ to implement the LMI module across Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), which acknowledged the constraints facing practical realisation.</p>

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Brown, A., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A. And Hughes, D. (2012). The role of career adaptabilities for mid-career changers, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80 (2012), pp. 754-761 DOI information: 10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.003.
- Bimrose, J., Hughes, D. & Barnes, S-A (2011) Integrating new technologies into careers practice: Extending the knowledge base, Wath-upon-Deerne, London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills. Available from: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/helping-individuals-succeed>
- Bimrose, J. and Barnes, S.-A. (2010) Labour market information (LMI), information communications and technologies (ICT) and information, advice and guidance (IAG): the way forward?, 1 - 57, London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills. Available from: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/ourwork/iag>
- Brown, A., Bimrose, J. and Barnes, S. -A (2009) 'Collaborative work-related learning and technology-enhanced learning. In International handbook of education for the changing world of work, 1687 - 1698, Editors: Maclean, R. and Wilson, D. (9781402052804) New York: Springer [Peer-reviewed Edited Volume]
- Bimrose, J. & Barnes, S-A., (2007). Styles of career decision-making. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 16, (2), pp 20-29. [Peer-reviewed Journal] Available from: <http://www.acer.edu.au/press/ajcd/contents>
- Bimrose, J. & Barnes, S-A., (2006). Is career guidance effective? Evidence from a longitudinal study in England. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 15 (2), pp 19-25. [Peer-reviewed Journal]

The research outlined here was underpinned by four research grants: from DfES (£309,000); EACEA (Euros 325,000); UKCES (£68,000); and the European FP7 (Euros 375,000). Other research grants relevant to this strand of investigation include: LMI for practitioners, funded by the Sector Skills Councils (£774,139) for the NGRF website (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/ngrf/lmifuturetrends/>), LMI for practitioners funded by the Skills Funding Agency for the National Careers Service website: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/LMI/Pages/default.aspx> (£58,000); and LMI online module & evaluation, for the Sector Skills Councils (£58,355).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This research has resulted in two main areas of impact: the first aimed at providing better information and ICT based resources for practitioners, and the second involving sustained interaction with policy-makers to provide advice and training.

Information and Resources for Careers Guidance practitioners: UK and International

The research has benefitted practitioners through the creation of the National Guidance Research Forum (NGRF); a website which informs practitioners about relevant developments in careers research and a 'one-stop shop' for high quality LMI. Subsequently, the Learning and Skills Agency (England) commissioned distilled 'job information' for careers practitioners and their clients, accessed from the National Careers Service website. From April 2012 to June 2013, access to the LMI module has been paid for by 843 registrants, 158,822 downloads had been recorded and the STEM module had 2,541 visits.

Internationally, Bimrose and Hughes were keynotes at a Symposium on LMI for careers practice held in Australia in May 2013 and made significant contributions to the subsequent 'Communique' which set out the recommendations for the sector. This event was the first international e-career services symposium on state-of-the-art technologies and provided opportunity for over 100 professionals and key stakeholders to shape the future direction of the electronic delivery of career services. In addition, from 2011 to 2013, manager practitioners in the Republic of Ireland and the Republic of China integrated the protocol on career decision making into careers education programmes developed from the 5 year longitudinal research into practice with 661 students from Dublin Institute of Technology and the National University of Ireland and 588 students at East China Normal University, Shanghai. Impact was positive and its implementation is now being integrated into careers service practice in these HEIs.

Policy Frameworks and Advice: UK

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The IER team worked with the UK Commission for Employment & Skills (UKCES); presented evidence to Parliamentary and Assemblies formal proceedings, supplemented by direct Ministerial advisory support in England and Wales and close working links with Ministers and/or senior policy-makers in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Bimrose was appointed as a member to the UKCES 'expert panel' (2011 – 2012), Hughes was appointed to a Ministerial advisory role as Commissioner at the UK Commission for Employment & Skills (2011-present) and Barnes was awarded a Visiting Research Fellowship (2012 - present), also at the UKCES.

In May 2012 Hughes was appointed as Chair of the National Careers Council in England; an advisory body to Government (June 2013). The Council's report to government ('Aspirational Nation') references IER's unique contribution to ICT and LMI developments, emphasising the need for new skills sets for career development practitioners, career adaptability and resilience, and early findings from the UKCES commissioned 'LMI for All' initiative. As a result, the National Careers Service forthcoming procurement plans (September 2013) will feature ICT, LMI and career resilience prominently to help transform careers services at both a national and local level.

The cumulative findings from the IER research significantly contributed to the UKCES's investment in LMI and ICT research to the value of c£645,000, in the 'LMI for All' project managed by Jenny Bimrose, (2012 – 2015); <http://www.lmiforall.org.uk/> and <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmiforall/lmi-for-all-phase2a-report.pdf>. This is informing and supporting UK-wide careers policies and practices at Ministerial and senior policy-maker level, as evidenced by its incorporation within the UKCES business plan (2012-2013) and references to the research in Departmental policy reviews and Parliamentary and Assembly hearings on the design, development and impact of careers services.

Elsewhere in the UK, senior Scottish Government officials consulted with Bimrose and Hughes on a new careers policy strategy in 2011. The resulting report 'Career information, advice and guidance in Scotland - A framework for service redesign and improvement' has been approved by the Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning and has recommendations for organisations in Scotland responsible for the planning, management and delivery of Career IAG including Skills Development Scotland, schools, colleges and local authorities. IER's contribution focussed on the use of LMI within and across the national careers service. As a result, Skills Development Scotland began exploratory talks with IER and has established a Celtic Nations LMI Concordat.

IER delivered a training event in 2011 to build capacity in the use of LMI in Northern Ireland. 100 careers practitioners attended, as did the Minister for Employment and Learning who wanted to learn more about the challenges faced by careers practitioners. The outcomes from this event fed into a policy review of LMI by the careers service, a subsequent Assembly Inquiry and strengthened policy developments between and across the Celtic Nations, which the Minister endorsed as a positive development to increase the impact of careers provision.

Policy frameworks and Advice: EU

Hughes was appointed by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) as an expert consultant on quality assurance and evidence-based policy systems development in 2011-2014. Hughes and Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze (senior advisor of the Hungarian National Employment Service) led on the initial design and testing of a new 'Quality Assurance Framework' for policymakers. Hughes has continued the work in 2013 working with Jennifer Mc Kenzie, a senior adviser to the Irish Government. The impact of the new framework is demonstrated by a growing number of countries using this to gather intelligence to inform professionalization discourse and future investments in careers provision.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1) Research for UKCES, available from their website:

- Bimrose, J. and Barnes, S. -A.(2010) 'Labour market information (LMI), information communications and technologies (ICT) and information, advice and guidance (IAG): the way forward?', 1 - 57, London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills. Available at: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/lmi-ict-and-iag.pdf>
- Bimrose, J., Hughes, D. & Barnes, S-A(2011) 'Integrating new technologies into careers practice: Extending the knowledge base', Wath-upon-Deerne, London: UK Commission for

Employment and Skills. Available at: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/integrating-new-technologies>

- Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A., Brown, A. and Hughes, D.(2011) 'The role of career adaptability in skills supply', Wath-upon-Deerne, London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills. Available at: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/er35-role-of-career-adaptability>
- 2) The LMI Concordat for the three Celtic Nations (Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) is referenced in the following published report that make specific reference to Warwick IER:
- Hughes, D. (2013) 'London Assembly Economy Committee: National, EU and International Literature Review: adult careers information, advice and guidance', London: Mayor's Office – London Assemble Committee, March 2013 (paragraph 2.5.2).
http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Literature%20review_%20Adult%20careers.pdf
- 3) The National Careers Council report, published June, 2013:
An Aspirational Nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/205147/bis-13-919-national-careers-council-report-an-aspirational-nation-creating-a-culture-change-in-careers-provison.pdf
Contains reference to IER's work on LMI:
Practical step 6.3 The National Careers Service should play a leading role in improving digital literacy to up-skill and/or reskill teachers, career development and employability practitioners and managers in the use of e-coaching and e-guidance and the effective use of 'LMI for All' and 'MOOCs' developed by expert providers.
Reference No. 82 – page 59
UKCES (2013) *LMI for All*, UK Commission for Employment & Skills: Wath-Upon-Deerne. Retrieved from: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/supporting-docs/lmi-for-all-flyer-5.pdf>
- 4) Confidential document (that can be produced, if requested):
Bimrose, J. & Hughes, D. (2012) Research Study on Costs Associated with a Revised Remit and Structure of the Careers Wales Service, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government, pp. 1-56. Available from: The Welsh Assembly Government
- 5) Career Development Association of Australia: E-Career Services Symposium: Expanding the limits of design, technology and practice. Communiqué, September 2013.
http://admin.cdaa.org.au/Images/News/E-Careers%20Symposium%20communiqué_final.pdf

References can be sought from:

- 6) Chief Executive, UKCES
- 7) Chief Executive, CSWP Ltd
- 8) Senior Adviser, Gatsby Charitable Foundation
- 9) Former Head of Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy Team, Enterprise and Employability for Young People Division, Scottish Government
- 10) Former President of the Career Development Association of Australia