

Global Careers Month 2022: an easy way for schools to join get involved

This year sees the first ever Global Careers Month (GCM). Beginning on November 8th and concluding on December 13th, the Month is a collaboration between seven international organisations – Cedefop, the European Commission, the European Training Foundation, the International Labor Organization, UNESCO, World Bank and the OECD - where teams working on both guidance for youth and adults are providing support. All these organisations are involved in different ways in helping countries to improve public policy, and each in its work has found that while the need for effective career guidance is greater than ever, too often it is not sufficiently available. Global Careers Month shines a light on the importance of career guidance and encourages renewed commitment to ensure that everybody has access to the support they need to plan and develop their careers.

An easy way for schools to celebrate Global Careers Month

One simple way for schools to increase effective career guidance is to invite employers (and people in work) into the school to speak with students about the jobs they do. [OECD analysis](#) of longitudinal survey data shows that students who engage with people in work whilst still in education can be expected to gain long-term benefits once they have begun their search for work.

The career carousel: an easy and effective career guidance intervention

One of the easiest forms of career guidance for schools to arrange is the career carousel.

In the carousel format, a school identifies a group of volunteers with different types of working experience to meet with students. Volunteers might be found from across the extended school community: parents, contractors, through teacher contacts or through intermediary organisations. Attention should be given to identifying a diverse collection of volunteers working in a wide range of occupations, including ones that are typically entered through both vocational and academic post-secondary routes. There should be no need for any specific training in advance of the carousel, just the usual advice that schools would offer to people coming in to speak with students. In most countries moreover, there will be no need for police checks on volunteers as they will never be left alone with students.

Career carousels are especially effective for students who are still considering their career plans and the major investments in education and training which they will make. Students in lower secondary education can be expected to gain particularly from participation. The format though is relevant to older and (in an adapted mode) younger students.

How career carousels work

In the carousel format, over one hour or ninety minutes, students engage with many different volunteers.

Guest speakers, individually or in pairs, rotate around a large room and join small groups of students to share details of, and respond to questions about, their career journeys and daily working lives. Typically, conversations last for 8-10 minutes before the volunteers move to the next table. Students are encouraged to be pro-active and are helped to prepare questions in advance. Prior to the event, students should be given opportunity to research the jobs and careers they will hear about. Afterwards, they should be helped to reflect on what they learnt and explore how they will further develop their career exploration with their school's support.

How other schools do it

For an example of how one London lower-secondary school runs career carousel, including model questions which students use to speak with volunteers, see this case study from [Addey and Stanhope school](#). And to see how a New Zealand programme brings final year students into contact with potential employers, read about [SpeedMeet](#). For younger children, the UK programme [Primary Futures](#) offers another simple model whereby volunteers are invited into school to meet children who begin by guessing the jobs they do.

Why meeting people in work is so important

Many studies exploring the career progression of young people show that they can expect to benefit from career guidance activities that allow them to meet and speak with employers and people in work. Last year for example, the OECD looked at longitudinal datasets in 10 countries. These are surveys which gather information from students when they are 15 and then go back to them 10 years later to see how they are doing in the working world. The [study](#) found strong patterns across countries and concluded by confirming 11 predictors of better adult employment outcomes linked to how students explore, experience and think about their potential futures in work. A notable finding was that many of the predictors require students to interact directly with people in work through activities like workplace visits, job fairs, career talks with guest speakers. What happens when the students connect with people in work is that they gain chance to develop new and useful information about their own career plans – and the more activities like this they engage in, the more likely it is that they will gain helpful insights.

Overwhelmingly, [studies](#) show that the career plans of students are very narrow – typically half or more plan on working in a small number of jobs. Encountering people in work is an excellent means of broadening interests and understanding of what the working world has to offer. Well managed guidance activities can help students to broaden their career thinking and where they interact with people in work they are much more likely to find the information they receive to be trustworthy. Gaining access to new and useful information in this way is a form of social capital that helps students to make better sense of their occupational plans and how they relate to their ongoing education and training.

Career carousels tend to be particularly effective because in comparison to job fairs, it is harder for students to disengage or be overly influenced by their peers. Equally, in comparison to career talks with guest speakers, students are more likely to broaden their interests through multiple interactions.

For more information on why international organisations see career guidance as so important, see the joint publication, [Investing in Career Guidance](#).