22. UNION CAREER GUIDANCE IN DENMARK

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the role of career guidance (CG) provided by trade unions for their members and the ways in which this guidance contributes to people's plans for and access to funds for competence development, adult education and further training. In Denmark, trade unions' contribution to career guidance has gained importance following the establishment of labour market competence development funds during the last decade. These funds are established through collective bargaining, placing trade unions in a key role. However, there is little systematic knowledge of the guidance provided by trade unions, and large sums have remained unused in the funds. In this chapter, we explore this phenomenon through a case study of the ways in which career guidance functions in trade unions. We have conducted interviews with a number of CG-practitioners working in trade unions for professional and skilled workers and here describe their work through practice portraits. These yield information on the practice and organisational framework of guidance in unions. We analyse models and strategies to support members' career development. Furthermore, we discuss the rise in career guidance activities in trade unions as a response to a fragmented public 'system' for adult career guidance and a highly complex framework (the competence development funds) for economic support for competence development. Besides the practice portraits, the chapter draws on existing empirical documentation, much of it produced in relation to tripartite negotiations between the state and the social partners.

INTRODUCTION

[Members] want career and competence development, but they don't know how to go about it. So they ask me (the career counsellor) – but I don't have the competence or mandate to sign, for example, an educational development contract. They don't dare to approach their boss or immediate superior because they are scared of being fired if, for example, they want to train in a different direction from the job they're in. And their boss or immediate superior is not always up-to-date regarding career and competence development opportunities in relation to financing, leave etc. (A union CG-practitioner)

Access to career guidance throughout life has long been part of the policy recommendations from supranational bodies. In 2008, the European Commission passed a resolution on the need for member states to adopt strategies to ensure lifelong (career) guidance. This resolution defines guidance as referring to

a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills. (European Council, 2008)

The high level of union membership and collective agreement coverage in the labour market means that the trade unions in Denmark and the other Nordic countries are in touch with many citizens as their career unfolds over the course of their lifetime. Guidance about up-skilling, basic education and further education and training has been a concern and an activity in the trade unions for many years. Recently, however, we have witnessed an increase in the use of the word career in relation to these activities. In Denmark, trade unions such as the union for retail and administrative staff (HK), the union for day-care workers (BUPL) and the association of Masters and PhDs (DM) advertise career consultations as a member benefit in ways similar to what we have observed and described in the section on Nordic trade unions and career guidance in this chapter. This chapter explores career guidance provided by trade unions in Denmark with a particular focus on guidance regarding access to funds for further education and training for the members. The intention is to provide greater clarity and insight concerning everyday career guidance practice in unions in Denmark and to relate to examples from other Nordic countries.

Union career guidance takes different forms and is practiced though individual interviews face to face or on-line, a ‘career telephone’ service, activities in the workplace, but also activities directed towards more organisational levels of impact. Career guidance provided to employed members by unions is usually funded collectively through the payment of union dues. In addition, some unions offer additional guidance services, such as specially organised courses for individuals or companies, at a cost. Career guidance offered to unemployed members through union-associated unemployment insurance is partly paid for through membership fees and partly subsidised by the state. The analysis presented in the chapter provides detailed insight into the organisation and delivery of the specific activities that comprise union career guidance in Denmark and discusses their relationship to competence development.

Hawthorn and Alloway (2009) note that not everybody identifies with the word career, because it sounds as if it only applies to fast-track, high achievers. Instead

of focusing on terms and policy definitions, Hawthorn and Alloway suggest a range of questions that career guidance attempts to answer: 'What kinds of jobs are there? What are their prospects? What would suit me? Do I need additional training to apply for that?' [...] Or: 'I don't need a new job just now but I would like to learn something new. What is available? Would it interest me? What do I need in order to start? What will it lead to?' (Hawthorn & Alloway, 2009, p. 13).

Such questions clearly signal that providing career guidance is a relevant task for a number of public and private organisations, including public employment services, educational institutions and trade unions. However, the 2004a international handbook on career guidance by the OECD states:

trade unions have shown limited interest in the development of career guidance services for their members. Where they offer such services themselves, these tend to be delivered by non-specialised personnel and focus on access to training rather than wider career development ... (but) ... Unions may negotiate for the provision of guidance services with employers in the process of collective bargaining. They may also themselves provide guidance. In Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom, some unions have run courses to train their shop stewards to act as 'educational ambassadors' or 'learning representatives' in encouraging their members (especially those with limited or no qualifications) to access education and training. (OECD, 2004a)

A collection of case studies of career guidance services available to employed adults in the EU published by Cedefop (2008), includes case studies of career guidance initiatives in trade unions. The main lessons learned from the case studies are that much trade union activity in relation to career guidance is linked to skill development for lower skilled workers. Consequently guidance is highlighted as a key activity prior to engaging in learning or development. The case studies also highlight that a multiplicity of approaches is required to get people to engage in career development activities. In a 2014 review of the evidence base on lifelong guidance, it is suggested that trade unions should play a role in relation to career guidance for working people, and especially in relation to career guidance in the workplace (Hooley, 2014), yet no references to empirical research specifically addressing the matter are provided. As such, research on career guidance provided by trade unions is still scarce, making it difficult to determine how widespread such guidance practices are, what forms they take and what impact they have.

Union career guidance can be seen as closely related to 'workplace guidance' which is described as an initiative where employees (often through unions) are trained to provide guidance on further training opportunities to colleagues (Plant, 2008; Plant & Turner, 2005). But research on such learning representatives or educational ambassadors in the UK and New Zealand indicates that 'while government and trade unions in both countries seek to promote workers' attainment of portable skills through the learning representative initiatives, some employers either favour

learning for current jobs only, or oppose the schemes completely' (Lee & Cassel, 2008).

This chapter was sparked by two observations from the Danish context. The first is that career guidance, including guidance for continuing education and training, is a growth area in trade unions and is presented as an important service for members. The second is that a large proportion of the considerable funds for employee competence development, established through collective bargaining and accrued over the last decade, is not being used. In this chapter, we take a closer look at these two developments, drawing both on existing documentation and on interviews with guidance practitioners in Danish trade unions. We begin by introducing the Nordic model of labour market relations before considering their role in career guidance, using Denmark as an example.

THE NORDIC MODEL OF LABOUR MARKET RELATIONS

In the Nordic countries, it is possible to identify common values and approaches to working life and labour market policy. These commonalities, often referred to as the 'Nordic model' (Nielson, 2016), include a system of collective bargaining covering most of the private sector as well as the public sector labour market; a system of voluntary unemployment insurance run by the trade unions but subsidised by the state; and a high level of labour market mobility, where the absence of high levels of job security for individual employees is compensated for by a relatively high level of unemployment benefit as well as access to training and retraining (the so-called flexicurity system).

These features are also linked to high levels of trade union membership in the Nordic countries (Høgedahl & Kongshøj, 2017), with almost 7 in 10 of all wage and salary earners in Iceland, Finland, Denmark and Sweden belonging to a trade union (ETUC & ETUI, 2017).

In Denmark, there is close to a 100% collective agreement coverage in the public sector, and around a 70% percentage coverage in the private sector (Ibsen, Høgedahl, & Scheuer, 2012). This means that collective bargaining between employer associations and trade unions (referred to in Denmark as the social partners) is an integral and highly visible part of political life in Denmark. Consequently, many aspects of working life are seen as the responsibility of these social partners, and too much state intervention in these matters is resented. On the other hand, the social partners actively participate in policy processes, partly through their links to different political parties, but more importantly through negotiations with the state about labour market issues of broader social interest. In the literature, this is referred to as the 'Danish model' (Lind & Rasmussen, 1997). Such tripartite negotiations (Mailand, 2011) focus on economic policy, employment measures and increasingly also on education and training. The establishment of funds for competence development is one important initiative that has been promoted by tripartite negotiations for several years.

NORDIC TRADE UNIONS AND CAREER GUIDANCE

The Nordic countries have taken strongly interrelated but still distinct routes in the development of career guidance activities for employed adults. Given the high level of unionisation in the Nordic countries, it is perhaps surprising that career guidance in trade unions has not been more of a theme in the policy literature on career guidance (Hooley, 2014; OECD, 2004b). This may reflect a traditional division of labour where trade unions take care of wages and working conditions while the welfare state is expected to take care of education and guidance.

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of collaborating with one another on the development of practice and policy in adult education and guidance. Nordic collaboration is supported and facilitated through organisations and networks such as the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) and the VALA Nordic Network, which is a network of career counselling and guidance programmes at higher education institutions in the Nordic and Baltic countries. In 2017, NVL published a report on cooperation and collaboration in guidance within each of the Nordic countries (NVL, 2017), mapping and discussing the level of coordination and cooperation between national and private guidance services for adults across different sectors and organisations. The report indicates that, while Norway and Finland have started to work on strategies to secure better coordination and integration of the different guidance services for adults (in Norway through career centres and in Finland through a strategy for lifelong guidance), very little is done to support adults in accessing guidance services in Denmark (*ibid.*). In Denmark, it is noticeable that, although legislation stipulates such coordinating efforts, there are no specific organisations or activities implementing the coordination (NVL, 2017). It is also interesting that, while the report maps the different organisations offering career guidance for adults in each country, trade unions are not mentioned.

However, according to their respective websites, the trade unions in the Nordic countries do offer career guidance as a service to their members. An example of this in Finland is TEK, the organisation for academic engineers and architects, which offers career services including a 'CV clinic', career coaching, LinkedIn groups, preparation for job interviews and more. An example from Norway is another union for technical and scientific professionals, TEKNA, offering career services including support in job seeking processes, CV check-ups and 45-minute career guidance interviews, as well as the possibility of referring members to the *Karrierehuset* (careers house), which offers guidance from trained guidance officers through a low-fee agreement with TEKNA. A report on lifelong career guidance in education and working life, published by the Norwegian National Trade Union Organisation, gives an example of collaboration between shop stewards at a factory that is closing down and the local career centre (*Landsorganisasjonen i Norge*, 2011, p. 12). This report highlights the importance of explaining what career guidance is, how it can look beyond the world of work and the benefits for the individual. Similar cases, where unions and workplaces that are being closed or outsourced collaborate

with guidance services, can be found in the other Nordic countries (for Denmark, see Thomsen, 2012).

In sum unions play different roles in relation to providing career guidance to their members; as providers of guidance services in house, as connector between workplaces and as brokers (often in the workplaces) of lifelong learning and of guidance services available in elsewhere. These roles will be elaborated through the Danish case study.

TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATIONS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT FUNDS IN DENMARK

In the year 2000, reforms were introduced that represented a watershed in Danish adult education. One of these reforms created a new system of part-time vocational and professional education with programmes at all levels of education, for the first time including higher education. Further reforms introduced a new system for funding vocational adult education and training through contributions from employers, as well as a new type of publicly funded financial support for adult students (Milana & Rasmussen, 2018). These reforms were mainly prepared by a government commission, but were linked to ongoing tripartite negotiations, with the commission wanting the social partners to take on a greater share of the funding of vocational adult education. Through this process, for the first time, the social partners came to share the responsibility for a major educational reform (Mailand, 2011, p. 8). This has since inspired several further tripartite initiatives related to education.

In 2006, the Danish Government published a report titled 'Lifelong up-skilling and education for all in the labour market', based on the work of a tripartite commission consisting mainly of representatives from the government, employer associations and trade unions (Finansministeriet, 2006). The report focused particularly on mechanisms and initiatives that could establish strong links between the demands on company flexibility and the competence levels of employees, especially low-skilled workers. The commission pointed out that there was a need to strengthen the motivation for education, especially among groups of skilled and semi-skilled workers, and to involve many more companies in competence development. The work of this tripartite commission was linked to the Globalisation Council, a high-level task force set up by the prime minister and including ministers, heads of the key employer and employee organisations, other key stakeholders and experts. The Globalisation Council allocated a major grant to boost activity in adult education, especially vocational competence development. In the tripartite commission, the employer and employee associations committed to supporting employee education by establishing funds as part of the collective negotiations. This system of labour market competence development funds has since continued and expanded. This means that, each year, employers in a given sector pay a certain fee per employee

(decided through the nationwide collective agreement) to a fund, where companies and employees can then apply for support for educational initiatives.

The competence development funds are established as collective agreements between employer and employee organisations in different trades. There are therefore multiple competence development funds, and the amount paid by employers differs from fund to fund. For instance, the Danish Chamber of Commerce, the employer association for a broad array of private service trades, has 16 different competence fund agreements, with employer fees ranging from 400–850 DKK (€ 50–110) yearly per full-time worker. In order to have the costs of education covered, employees must apply, either individually or through their company, depending on the regulations in their collective agreement. Within a fixed limit, course fees, transport costs and wage compensation may be covered. Not all kinds of education are accepted; each competence fund maintains a ‘positive list’ of eligible courses.

Competence funds have been earmarked for the education and training of employees in private companies and public organisations as part of collective agreements. These funds have continued to accumulate because the level of activity has fallen below expectations. In 2017, 2.3 billion DKK (€308m) were available in the different funds. This opens up a central role for career guidance in terms of supporting individuals and companies in accessing the funds. This makes it essential to know what the relationship between career guidance and access to the funds is today.

CRISIS AND REFORM OF THE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING SYSTEM

The fact that competence development funds were not being used as much as expected became a key issue during tripartite negotiations in 2016. The social partners and the government agreed that there was an urgent need to analyse companies’ needs for employee competences and to discuss how adult and continuing education could be tailored to better match future labour market demands for a flexible and well-qualified workforce. An expert group was established with the mission to ‘analyse and present possible solutions for adjusting and improving adult and continuing education, focusing especially on companies’ and adults’ competence needs and on quality and efficiency in provision’ (Ekspertgruppen for Voksen-, Efter- og Videreuddannelse, 2017, p. 10, authors own translation). The group’s recommendations largely followed earlier policy, focusing on coherence and collaboration in the system, more recognition of prior learning, and flexible and efficient institutional management. Referring to the Danish results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) survey, the report argued that adults and especially adults with low levels of skills need more general knowledge and skills.

In 2017, after several months of negotiations, the government and the social partners presented a tripartite agreement based on the recommendations from the expert group (Trepartsaftale, 2017). This agreement involves various types of

initiative. One type aims to improve the framework for companies' access to and use of adult and continuing education. Examples include simplifying the system of labour market training courses, increasing economic compensation for companies and increasing public funding for the relevant educational institutions. Another type focuses on improving the conditions and motivation of employees. Examples include increasing wage compensation (allowance increased from 80% to 100% of the maximum unemployment benefit) for certain types of continuing education, especially courses combining basic skills with vocational competence. Considerable funding will be made available for projects actively encouraging employees to use the opportunities for adult education.

An integrated system of education and career guidance for adults will be established. The agreement states that many different actors are involved in providing adult guidance, but there is no well-defined division of tasks and it is not certain that guidance reaches the groups of adults that have most need of it.

A single point of entry to the adult education system will be situated within the framework of eGuidance. This service will offer guidance for both businesses/employers and individuals in the form of information about training opportunities, enrolling in courses and applying for adult education grants (via telephone, chat and email) – both to people wanting to upgrade their qualifications within their current jobs and to people seeking new career paths.

TRADE UNION CAREER GUIDANCE: PRACTICE PORTRAITS

In Denmark, career guidance specifically targeting adults has only started to receive attention during the last decade, and the guidance services available have been characterised as somewhat opaque and thus difficult for the individual to navigate (Cort, Thomsen, & Mariager-Anderson, 2015). One reason for this is that legislation governing career guidance is divided between several policy areas and ministries and covers many different career guidance services. While the Ministry of Science and Higher Education is responsible for guidance in relation to higher education, the Ministry of Education is responsible for guidance in relation to other areas of education, and the Ministry of Employment is responsible for career guidance in relation to employment, with each ministry providing different services. For educational guidance for adults, there are three support structures: (1) eGuidance, offering personal guidance to all citizens regarding adult and continuing education via telephone, email and online chat; (2) Study Choice, offering career guidance regarding higher education and career choices; (3) Adult Education and Continuing Training institutions offer guidance on their programmes. In relation to employment, services are mainly provided through trade unions, public employment services (PES) and private consultancy firms (for instance out-placement schemes).

For this case study we have conducted six semi-structured interviews with a trade union official, four CG-practitioners from four different local trade unions and a senior consultant from LO, which is the largest central organisation for workers

on the Danish labour market. The CG-practitioners and the official that were interviewed work for local branches of the unions HK, FOA, IDA and BUPL. HK, the Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark, is Denmark's largest union for salaried employees. It has 275,000 members working within the retail sector and as administrative staff within both the public and the private sectors. FOA, Trade and Labour, is a trade union with 180,000 members working in fields such as healthcare, social services, day-care and cleaning. IDA, the Danish Society of Engineers, has more than 110,000 members in the fields of technology, natural sciences and IT. BUPL, the Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators, has around 60,000 members, mainly trained staff in the field of early childhood education and care. In addition this, we secured an expert interview with a senior consultant within career guidance from LO, the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions. As mentioned above, this is the largest central organisation for workers on the Danish labour market, representing more than 1 million members through the affiliated unions, constituting approximately 50 % of the Danish workforce.

The interview guide was inspired by the practice portrait methodology (Bechmann Jensen, 2005; Markard, Holzkamp, & Dreier, 2004;). The practice portrait is a comprehensive method that consists of a large set of questions that help practitioners to describe, analyse and discuss their own practice. We structured the interviews in four themes: (1) the union as institution and the conditions for career guidance work, (2) theoretical and practical cornerstones of everyday career guidance practice; i.e., theories, methods, technologies and procedures, (3) specific conditions at work, and (4) internal and external communication regarding practice. Offering a very open interview framework, the practice portrait is well-suited to this chapter's exploratory purpose. Questions under the different themes are intended to serve as inspiration for the interviewer, allowing a semi-structured approach. Informed consent was obtained at the beginning of the interviews. A detailed summary of each interview was produced by the author who conducted the interview. The researchers each performed a thematic content analysis (Kvale, 1996) of all interviews based on the following research questions: What is the character of career guidance in unions as described by the CG-practitioners? And how do they describe challenges and opportunities regarding their work? This process resulted in the identification and development of a set of themes, which were then applied to the data again and discussed in the research team. This process of analysis resulted in the themes which are detailed below. The first theme examines the guidance activities in relation to the first research question. The following theme examines the second research question and provides detailed insights into the challenges and opportunities in union career guidance.

The Guidance Activities

Thematic analysis of the interviews shows that there are differences as well as similarities in the CG-practitioners' activities and practices, and even in the way they

understand the concepts career guidance and career. One CG-practitioner explains that the word career may not even be something that members can identify with. ‘It hasn’t been customary among our members to talk about career’ (HK).

The interviewed CG-practitioners are trade union employees, based in national or regional centres of the organisations. They have different educational backgrounds, but have all pursued continuing education or courses in the field of guidance. They describe a broad understanding of the term career, reminiscent of common definitions within the field of career guidance, such as that coined by Collin and Watts: ‘The individual’s development in learning and work throughout life’ (1996, p. 386).

Activities offered by all the participating local trade unions include individual support when members seek help at their own initiative. The career counsellors taking part in our interviews all highlight that there are local differences and that they can only account for their local branch in terms of describing the specific activities. We have organised the activities in Table 22.1.

Table 22.1. Career guidance activities in trade unions

Activity		
Pro-active	Local/national political involvement in budgeting, for instance in the municipalities	Organisation
	Structural involvement such as initiating education programmes on behalf of groups of members financed through competence development funds	
	Hotlines etc. as a national service to widen access and participation	
Re-active	Outreach activities at in workplaces to provide information about and motivation for lifelong learning in groups and communities	Individual
	Information about rights and possibilities through websites and newsletters	
	Individual support through conversations initiated by members	

From the interviews, we learn that career guidance in the traditional form of member-initiated individual consultations, either face-to-face or via telephone, is available in all the unions included in our study. The CG-practitioners’ tasks are to respond to the member’s questions and thoughts about their own career development. This is the dominant mode of delivery as described by the practitioners in the interviews. However, as described above, the content and form of these interviews differs. In BUPL, the CG-practitioner who was interviewed has practised an interview form she likes to call ‘work life and career conversations’ rather than just career guidance for 10 years. She explains:

Career is a linear concept. Work life conversations offer more associations. Career is part of a work life. If a member is fired, because they cannot express themselves about certain things, I help them to do this in an appropriate way. I can help them prior to an interview so that they present themselves as the best version of themselves. That is career guidance in their work life. (BUPL)

Work life and career conversations focus on the individual's needs and may be based on questions about current work life status, what the individual wants to do in the future and what it would take to achieve that. Alternatively, they may focus on the individual's difficulties at his or her current workplace and how to deal with them. The CG-practitioner takes on the role as an outsider with knowledge of the profession but with no personal stake. The aim of the conversation is that the member leaves with a plan. The scope of the conversation is determined by the member, allowing topics relating to work life in a broader sense to be broached; topics which might fall outside the realm of traditional career guidance. BUPL also offers career guidance from their central office. In 2017, BUPL established a new project, Career Guidance by Phone. This project targets people who have been made redundant and are interested in further education or who do not thrive in their current workplace and aims to discuss career skills and opportunities both within and outside the profession. The project is staffed centrally. The CG-practitioner we interviewed was very enthusiastic about this project and hopes that it will highlight the importance of career guidance in unions and result in the hiring of qualified career guidance professionals.

In HK, the CG-practitioner sees educational ambassadors as a way to signpost career guidance services to members, but also as a way to meet members at their workplace. The CG-practitioners are aware of the idea of training educational ambassadors a result of the latest tripartite negotiations. One of them mentions the idea of training shop stewards in career guidance so they can act as educational ambassadors in the workplace and thereby facilitate a first encounter with career guidance and reach out to members who might not otherwise identify with career guidance. Outreach activities are also being introduced to career guidance practice in a top-down process resulting from the most recent tripartite agreement. Working with educational ambassadors and outreach activities are two forms of guidance that require quite different skills of CG-practitioners than traditional one-to-one consultations. Outreach activities in particular require that CG-practitioners collaborate closely with educational ambassadors and interact with groups of members in their workplaces. This skill has been characterised as social systems interventions (Schiersmann et al., 2016). As part of what it refers to as the 'Career Campaign', HK has a goal that all local branches will offer 'career development days' or 'work life inspiration seminars'. The CG-practitioners that took part in the

interviews all identify concrete initiatives that have the potential to develop and qualify their guidance practice, such as design your life (IDA), the career hotline (BUPL) and educational ambassadors (HK).

The interviewees from BUPL and FOA highlight tasks or work that are both structural and political. Structural work involves active collaboration with local public employers, such as municipal and regional authorities, in order to set up educational initiatives for members. The following initiatives are mentioned: an (accelerated) primary and lower secondary teacher training programme awarding credit for prior learning and job-rotation schemes creating access to education. Political work, typically done in collaboration between trade union officials and guidance professionals, involves improving conditions for members who are municipal employees by influencing municipal budget negotiations. In FOA, this work has developed significantly over the last 4–5 years and the CG-practitioners have moved from a rather periphery position to participating in municipal committees.

Trade Union Career Guidance: Challenges and Possibilities

In the interviews, the CG-practitioners addressed certain themes as challenges and/or possibilities:

- How can we reduce complexity – especially regarding members' experiences with the competence funds?
- How can we reach out to members to inform them about the services on offer, members' rights and motivate them to engage with lifelong learning?
- How can we fulfil the members' wishes and offer educational choice within a collective framework?
- What role do plans and planning play for the individual and the organisation?
- How can we create opportunities for members through organisational and political work?

There are often two sides to such questions and CG-practitioners describe complex processes within the union, within members places of employment, the wider societal and political context and the delivery of career guidance in unions.

Reducing Complexity in Relation to the Competence Funds

One very important task for the CG-practitioners is to reduce the complexity involved in learning about and applying for competence funds. It should be easy for members to access the funds, but it is a complex process. The CG-practitioner and trade union official from HK, in particular, explain that their members can apply for many different competence funds, each governed by different rules according to collective agreements of different trades. For this reason, most unions have employees whose responsibility it is to know the complex rules and regulations for applying to the different funds. CG-practitioners work closely with these colleagues and stress the

importance of shielding members from the complexity, as it may adversely affect their motivation.

Outreach Activities, Information and Motivation

The CG-practitioners stress the importance of reaching all members via outreach activities. This has always been a goal in their practice, for example via collaborations with enterprises embroiled in redundancy or outsourcing processes to develop upskilling courses for certain employees. However, it is expected that outreach activities will become more widespread as a result of the tripartite negotiations' allocation of funds specifically for this purpose. Some CG-practitioners organise go-home meetings at members' workplaces aimed at informing about the competence funds and the importance of education and training.

In HK Private, our biggest sector, we want to educate workplace agents [similar to educational ambassadors]. They need to understand the educational system and the competence funds. This way, more people in our organisation share the task of creating interest in education. There are members who seek out further education by themselves, members who can manage with the help of a workplace agent, and, finally, members who will book an appointment with a CG-practitioner. (HK)

Regarding the possibility of booking an appointment for personal career guidance, three out of the four CG-practitioners describe a geographical challenge, as CG-practitioners are typically based in the bigger cities, making face-to-face meetings difficult for members living in rural areas. While they all offer career guidance via electronic media, they also all stressed that face-to-face meetings are valuable and should be a possibility for all members regardless of where they live.

Educational Choice within a Structural and Collective Framework

The emphasis on personal choice in relation to education and training varies among the collective agreements. Employers have a responsibility to ensure that their employees are qualified to do their job. The CG-practitioner from BUPL describes that, while employers, managers and municipalities love the competence funds, they do not always use them as intended. This is partly because of the phrasing in funding documents, which makes it unclear who the funds are for. For instance, some funds are called 'municipal funds', which some municipal employees see as indicating that it is the municipalities that decide which courses they can apply for. Another reason for the gulf between intentions and reality is that the municipalities lack funding for education and see the competence funds as a resource at their disposal. As a result, some municipalities write applications for competence funds on behalf of their employees to attend courses chosen by management rather than the individual employee. In these cases, it becomes a task for the CG-practitioner to inform either

the members or the local shop steward that employees are in fact entitled to choose and suggest courses to management: 'Otherwise no employee will be allowed to choose what they want to study, and that was the intention with the competence funds' (BUPL).

Plans and Planning for the Individual and the Workplace

The successful use of competence funds requires careful planning. Besides learning about and identifying specific educational options, members must find out whether their choice of education is offered locally, if funding is possible, either via the competence funds or with support from their employer, and whether they have time to participate. For the employer, the challenge is to plan for a temporary worker to step in while the employee attends educational courses. Not all agreements include a CG-practitioner to aid this process of complicated long-term planning.

The senior consultant from LO is particularly engaged in the importance of planning. 'Basically, it is a challenge that such activities require planning. And, ultimately, that is probably the most important issue when it comes to people's participation in something that takes place during working hours. The vast majority of companies today think it's horrible. It is bad enough that people go on holiday. And they will, consciously or unconsciously, feel like it's a self-inflicted problem if they prepare something where they know that people are away in the autumn while they do not know in advance whether it will be during a busy period'. The CG-practitioners also consider this situation a challenge, but see it as their professional role to find solutions.

Creating Opportunities through Structural and Political Work

The structural and political work involved in creating educational opportunities for members is particularly evident in the interview with the CG-practitioner from FOA, but it is also present in the interviews with practitioners from BUPL and HK and with the senior consultant from LO. There is an organisational division between centrally developed and local guidance initiatives. For example, in launching the 'career hotline' as a key initiative, HK set up a network group comprising those who man the hotline and local CG-practitioners. They meet every second month to exchange ideas, practices and challenges, providing a forum for discussion of and reflection on guidance in the central organisation as well as locally.

The CG-practitioners describe varying degrees of interest in career guidance in their organisation. While some do not mention it, the CG-practitioner from HK states that the career guidance activities receive a lot of attention because members communicate their satisfaction with the career guidance service to other parts of the organisation.

The CG-practitioner from FOA describes a political effort to create a solid foundation for career guidance work and competence development for members, for

example by entering into agreements with local authorities and securing funding to supplement competence funds.

As long as you can create a course that is cost-neutral for the municipalities, almost anything is possible. Our competence fund offers DKK 25,000 a year for each member's competence development. It's the best thing that happened to us.

This is particularly important for agreements in which there is a requirement for co-financing from employers. Such co-financing can constitute a barrier for members who are covered by the collective agreement with, for example, the municipal employers, as this agreement requires 20% co-financing.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we have examined career guidance practice in unions through interviews with CG-practitioners in four Danish trade unions. This study adds to the limited body of literature on career guidance in trade unions through the identification of five themes that the CG-practitioners consider important. First, they stress the importance of reducing complexity in members' encounters with the funds for competence development. Second, they consider how trade unions can reach out to members to inform them about their career guidance activities, promote lifelong learning in general and provide information about rights. Third, they describe the importance of striking a balance between members' wishes and the structural and collective framework. Fourth, they highlight the need for individual plans and organisational planning. Finally, they focus on creating opportunities for members through organisational and political work. In addition to the obvious and acute need for a simplification of the funding schemes for competence development in Denmark, the analysis of career guidance activities in trade unions points to several important issues, which will be addressed in this concluding discussion.

The first issue to discuss is the role of career guidance in relation to the use of the competence development funds set aside for continuing education for citizens in Denmark. Understanding and communicating about the funds is in itself a demanding task not only for the employees but also for trade union CG-practitioners trying to support their members in the long-term planning necessary to make use of the funds. There is a risk that career guidance practitioners spend a lot of time guiding about rules and regulations and navigating the systems rather than supporting members in their personal process of exploring and deciding on the career development.

The need for individual long-term career development plans and for organisational planning at the workplace related to the individual's right to leave is no doubt one key factor contributing to the large sums that have remained unused in the funds. Up until now the unions have not showed a clear and coordinated effort to bring the need for access to career guidance into the tripartite negotiations in Denmark.

The social partners have been primarily concerned with tailoring education and training to accommodate employers' future needs by up-skilling employees rather than providing access to professional career guidance that can support the individual citizen's realisation of needs and aspirations. This means that, while funding for competence development is available, opportunities are not exploited due to the lack of access to appropriate and relevant support structures for individuals. We argue that career guidance is such a support structure. Previous research on how career guidance can become a meaningful practice in people's lives shows that career guidance may be experienced as relevant if it provides a context for action in which participants can join forces with career guidance practitioners to analyse, problematise and create new and shared opportunities in relation to their future educational or vocational participation in society (Thomsen, 2012). The need for lifelong guidance, as emphasised by the European Commission (European Council, 2008), still does not seem to have been addressed and our analysis gives rise to a discussion of potentially enabling institutions or mechanisms. There are various approaches to achieving this goal of guidance provision suited to a society characterised by lifelong learning. Guidance can be embedded in the workplace, offered through trade unions or, as Norway has chosen to do, provided through the establishment of independent, publicly funded regional career centres manned by professional career guidance counsellors (Haug et al., 2019) or as a combination of the three. If a combination model is employed it is likely that the role of educational ambassadors as brokers of not only lifelong education but also lifelong guidance will be enhanced.

Finally, the growth of career guidance activity in trade unions should also be discussed in relation to a broader change in the role and character of Danish trade unions. In the broader labour market policy, the influence of trade unions has declined. Jørgensen and Schultze (2011) argue that trade unions have increasingly been sidelined in labour market policy processes and that the collective trust in partnerships is eroding. Instead, trade unions are increasingly forced to seek political influence through lobbying. The extent of this change may be questioned, but it certainly calls for new approaches in trade union work, both in pursuing political influence and in promoting member interests in other ways, such as through career guidance. In this sense, access to professional career guidance could be at the centre of trade union interests in future negotiations.

In this respect, we suggest career guidance be considered as a first step in a process of double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Double-loop learning describes a process through which organisations have the opportunity to learn through the exploration of values, norms, desires and beliefs of the members of the organisation and integrate this knowledge in future organisational development. In the case of career guidance in trade unions, career guidance practitioners can gain detailed insight into members' struggles in the course of their everyday working lives and use this insight to feed into the development of future career guidance activities and other types of activities to meet the needs of members. Furthermore, knowledge

about the concrete struggles and needs of trade union members could feed into future policy development in relation to careers in the Nordic countries, where careers are embedded in models of collective bargaining, participation in society through work (see Bakke, Chapter 2, this volume) and the idea of lifelong learning as a collective project.

The idea of career development as a collective project yet again raises other issues of concern and possible future studies. If trade union influence is declining, is it then a good way forward to see trade unions in a central role for the delivery of career guidance for adults in Denmark in the future? Is it possible for trade unions to support the access to career guidance in solidarity with people who are not members? And what could career guidance practices learn from the corporatist view on career guidance which has the potential to support lifelong learning as a collective and solidary project?

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