

# Are Career Development Services Actually Relevant?

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This is an important, but not adequately researched question. The research that is available shows that the career development of those who do receive career development support in some form or the other progresses more smoothly than those who do not receive support.

## Service delivery models make a difference

Models for the delivery of careers services are many. Some examples are:

- The Curriculum Model.
- The Centre Model.
- The Individual Model.
- The Virtual Model.

The effectiveness of careers services seems to be linked to the model used to deliver the service.

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT: DATA FROM THE PROMISE FOUNDATION

Our research and experience over that last two decades across nearly 150,000 adolescents and youth shows that when it is effective career guidance has a clear and definite outcomes on psychological wellbeing, educational and social orientation, financial and economic benefits. Some of these potential outcomes are listed below:

### Psychological Wellbeing

- Improves knowledge of self
- Highlights personal talents as well as weaknesses
- Expands awareness of the world of work
- Enhances agency and self-efficacy
- Raises aspirations
- Develops decision making
- Increases exploration
- Reduces negative career beliefs
- Increases self-mediation
- Improves preparedness
- Builds lifelong perspective

### Impact on Educational Outcomes

- Improves accuracy of choices
- Enhances person-course fit
- Increases course completion rates
- Strengthens engagement
- Improves educational outcomes
- Fosters goal oriented learning

### Impact on Social Orientation

- Promotes stronger orientation to the common good

### **Financial Benefits**

- Optimises investment of personal/family finances

### **Economic Benefits**

- Improves understanding of worker-employer interface
- Contributes to workforce development
- Creates linkages between systemic provisions and the individual

## **Identifying Target Groups**

Outcomes of careers services are also linked closely to the way in which target groups are identified. Some approaches are:

### **The Psychological-Cultural Approach**

- Developmental Stages and Tasks.
- Needs and supports required for each developmental stage.
- Variations across cultural groups.

### **The Socioeconomic Status Approach**

- Different socioeconomic status backgrounds have different career development needs.

### **The Gender Sensitive Approach**

- Women are at a disadvantage in the labour market at the point of entry and well as career progress.

### **The Special Needs Approach**

- This could include persons with disability, immigrants, the newly qualified, the laid off, those returning to the work force.

## **Counsellor's Bias**

Bias refers to an inclination or preference that could influence judgment and slant the counselling intervention in a certain direction. More often than not, counseling techniques and methods employed become an extension of the philosophic and theoretical persuasions of the career counsellor. It has become fashionable to take a qualitative approach. Controversies surround assessment and whether psychometric devices have any value. Many approaches focus almost exclusively on the client's interests and the idea of aptitudes is often discarded.

The outcomes of career guidance could be strongly influenced by such biases. For example while qualitative approaches seem to be well accepted in Western contexts, this does not seem to be reflected in other cultures. In India (particularly in urban contexts) formal,

quantitative testing is an integral and expected part of the educational system. Parents as well as the student expect aptitude testing and are confused and disoriented if the interaction ends without a set of “test-results” being produced declaring the “level” of their child’s aptitude and interest.

If a careers service is preoccupied with philosophic positions rather than the clients' felt needs, outcomes could be poor.

**Career development services are most effective when they are strongly rooted in the cultural and economic realities of the persons for whom it is intended.**

**Also, true outcomes are best seen in the long run.**