Precarious employment refers to the increasing risks for people in the labour market, including the temporary nature of employer-employee contracts, inadequate benefits for employees, and lack of opportunities for skill development and employment mobility. The consequences of precarious employment directly impact the wages earned by people at all levels of employment. Precarious work is unevenly distributed among the lower-paid jobs and unskilled workers who may be most at risk for job insecurity and for pressure to accept work in settings with noxious workplace conditions. However, precarious work is also a matter of concern for highly educated university graduates all around the world who may have been expecting a seamless transition to employment in their selected field. Graduates who have invested resources in obtaining higher education may have to settle for lower-paid, part-time contract work that does not match their educational qualifications or support long-term employment in their fields of study.

Precarious employment may have causes and effects differing from one part of the world to another. Although self-employment may be encouraged as an option, the rates of success and failure of small businesses make this form of employment precarious for many individuals and families. Other forms of employment, e.g., self-employment, agrarian work, farming, may involve alternative ways to organize livelihoods, but conditions such as climate or unstable political situations may add to the precarious nature of their work. Many people choose part-time work in order to balance family and other life roles, but in most cases, precarious part-time or full-time work is not chosen voluntary or preferred by workers or employees.

It is timely to question who is impacted, and how educational and vocational guidance interventions may need to be adjusted to address the needs of people who are stuck in the conditions associated with precarious employment. Without such examination, it is easy to accept current conditions as normative
as opposed to challenging the societal and political structures that contribute to precarious employment.

IAEVG appeals to practitioners, policy makers, and employers, to recognize and act upon the individual and social costs of precarious work and insecure livelihoods. Educational and vocational guidance attests to the person and the context and strives for social justice to overcome the causes and negative effects of precarious employment. IAEVG members are encouraged to increase their efforts to design and deliver interventions that help individuals, families and communities to improve their capacity for obtaining secure and safe employment. This requires an examination of service access and to make sure that educational and vocational guidance is relevant, inclusive, accessible, and affordable. IAEVG members also have an important role to play in leading and advocating for partnerships with stakeholders such as communities, policy-makers, employers, and trade unions to call attention to precarious employment and to construct effective solutions with the aspirational goal to provide safe, sustainable, and meaningful work for all citizens.