



Association internationale d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle – AIOSP
International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance - IAEVG
Internationale Vereinigung für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung - IVBBB
Asociación Internacional para la Orientación Educativa y Profesional - AIOEP

IAEVG Communiqué on Precarious Employment

Adopted by the IAEVG Board of Directions, September 30, 2018, Gothenburg, Sweden

*On the occasion of the 2018 International IAEVG-Conference “A Need for Change”, the IAEVG Board of Directors publishes the following press release/statement, **on precarious employment.***

Employment provides people with financial resources, a source of social identities through connecting with other people, and an avenue for contributing to local and national economies. People’s access to stable employment is core to their sense of safety and security. There are clear benefits of employment for people’s mental and physical health and for maintaining a sense of hope for the future. However, fluctuations in the global economy create volatility and instability in the labour market, leading to cycles of employment/unemployment or underemployment associated with temporary positions. For many citizens, meaningful and sustainable work is unattainable. Rather than looking forward to a future with long-term security, many people are consumed with day-to-day living and managing their immediate needs for a livelihood.

The world of work has shifted from long-term employment to one in which workers are characterized as disposable, replaceable, and responsible for managing their own employment. Although it may not be possible or even desirable to return to a time when more paternalistic relationships between employers and employees existed, critical examination is required about who is at greater risk of being excluded or marginalized in the current labour market conditions. There are variations between sectors in the labour market, work tasks, and the working conditions that people face in their daily efforts to earn income to survive. It is also important to account for variations in employment conditions that occur across regions and between countries.

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



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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.