

Exploring green guidance:

A handbook for practitioners

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ABOUT EXPLORING GREEN GUIDANCE

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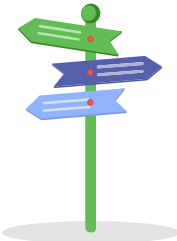


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SUMMARY OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is the result of the work developed through the Exploring Green Guidance project, an EU funded project, which joined concerned careers practitioners and researchers from five countries. It aims to help careers practitioners get started with green guidance. It starts by presenting an argument for the need for green guidance in the contemporary world, moving to what green guidance is and how it can be done, offering a reflection on different approaches and ways of doing it, so that practitioners may find the one they feel most comfortable with. It also considers ways for the careers practitioner to adapt to clients' and students' positions and attitudes to environmental issues and offers a reflection and guidelines for an ethical green guidance. After setting the scene for green guidance, the handbook then focuses on practical ways of doing green guidance with individuals and groups, and through more systemic forms of action like brokerage, advocacy, lobbying and system change. Throughout the handbook we have added opportunities for further reading, for reflection and for engaging critical approaches to these issues to challenge readers to consider various possibilities of doing green guidance. Another important feature are the tools that are mentioned throughout the handbook. These tools were developed through the project with the participation of careers practitioners from these five countries. These aim to offer careers practitioners interested in green guidance practical tools to use with their clients and students, and to develop their advocacy skills towards systems change.

We invite you to start this journey towards greening your practice with us!

To access additional resources related to this handbook, namely the toolbox and the literature review, please visit www.green-guidance.eu



GLOSSARY

Activism is taking individual or collective action, e.g. through a campaign, to bring about professional, political, social, economic or environmental change.

Biodiversity encompasses the variety of life on Earth, including the genes within species, the different species themselves, and the ecosystems they inhabit. It's a fundamental aspect of our planet's health and is crucial for sustaining all life.

Carbon is a fundamental component of all living organisms and is found in various forms like diamond, graphite, and coal. It plays a crucial role in the Earth's carbon cycle and is important for climate change due to carbon dioxide's role as a greenhouse gas.

Carbon footprint refers to the total amount of greenhouse gases emitted directly or indirectly by an individual, organization, product, or activity. While commonly used to encourage personal responsibility for climate change, the concept was popularised by the oil giant BP through a marketing campaign to shift attention away from corporate responsibility and onto individual consumers (see The Mark Kaufman's article for the background on this).

Career is our development through our life, learning and work.

Career guidance supports individuals and groups to discover more about work, leisure and learning and to consider their place in the world and plan for their futures. It can take a wide range of forms, but at its heart it is a purposeful learning opportunity which supports individuals and groups to consider and reconsider work, leisure and learning in the light of new information and experiences and to take both individual and collective action.

Climate is the average weather over a period. Climate includes information on the average temperature in different seasons, rainfall, and sunshine.

Climate change describes any change in the average and variability of temperature and weather patterns over the long term, due to natural or human causes.

Climate crisis is a term that is used to describe global warming and climate change and their effects. This term and the term climate emergency have been used to emphasise the threat of global warming to Earth's natural environment and to humans, and to urge urgent climate change mitigation and transformational adaptation.

Climate justice links the climate crisis to social and economic inequality, emphasising that those least responsible for emissions are often the most affected. It calls for fair distribution of both the burdens and benefits of climate action.

Consumption refers to the act of using something, like resources or products, to meet needs or desires.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a structured approach to learning that helps individuals maintain and improve their professional knowledge and skills throughout their careers. It involves actively engaging in learning activities to stay current with the latest developments in their field and enhance their abilities.

Critical psychology describes a variety of approaches that challenge assumptions, values, and practices within mainstream psychology that help maintain an unjust and unsatisfying status quo.

Degrowth describes a deliberate and equitable reduction in the scale of production and consumption. It's

about consciously shrinking economies to fit within the planet's biophysical limits, prioritising well-being and sustainability over profit.

Doughnut economics is a visual framework for sustainable development that balances essential human needs and planetary boundaries, aiming to ensure no one falls short on access to life's basic needs while collectively avoiding ecological overshoot. It allows to consider human well-being and equity within the limits of Earth's ecosystems.

Eco-anxiety is a term used for the feeling of distress caused by awareness of climate change and frustration over political inaction (sadness, anger, helplessness, despair). Some see it as a reflection of collective concern rather than a personal disorder, and prefer terms like "eco-anger" or "eco-grief."

Eco-entrepreneurship describes the process of starting a business that offers sustainable products or services, aiming to reduce environmental harm.

Eco-intrapreneurship is about driving environmental change from within an existing organisation.

Ecology is the scientific study of relationships between living things and their environment. Ecology encompasses a wide range of scales, from the interactions of individual organisms to the functioning of entire ecosystems and the biosphere.

Ecopsychology is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field that focuses on the synthesis of ecology and psychology and the promotion of sustainability.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a pedagogical approach that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to address interconnected global challenges like climate change and inequality, fostering a sustainable and equitable future.

Environment describes the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity.

Environmental justice. See climate justice.

Environmental resilience is the ability of an ecosystem to withstand and recover from disturbances, both natural and human-caused, while maintaining its structure, function, and services.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a framework used to assess a company's sustainability and ethical impact. It considers how a company operates in relation to the environment, its relationships with society, and its governance structure.

Fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are a group of non-renewable energy-rich resources formed from the remains of ancient plants and animals over millions of years. They include coal, oil, and natural gas, and are used for heating, electricity generation, and transportation. These are hydrocarbons and, when burned, they release carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Global warming. Global warming is the long-term heating of Earth's surface observed since the pre-industrial period (between 1850 and 1900) due to human activities, primarily fossil fuel burning, which increases heat-trapping greenhouse gas levels in Earth's atmosphere. This term is not interchangeable with the term "climate change".

Green. The colour green is used as a metaphor to denote activities, ideas and initiatives that relate to environmental and sustainability issues.

Green professions. Jobs directly related to environmental protection, such as working in renewable energy, conservation, or sustainability. These often require specialised training and play a key role in tackling ecological challenges.

Greenhouse gases are atmospheric gases that trap heat, contributing to the greenhouse effect and raising Earth's surface temperature. The primary greenhouse gasses include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and synthetic gases like hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Greenwashing is a deceptive marketing practice that involves making false or misleading statements about a product or company's environmental impact to create the impression of sustainability. It aims to boost public image and sales by convincing consumers that a company or product is environmentally friendly when it is not.

Ideology. Generally, a worldview or set of assumptions about how a society works; more strictly, the set of ideas inculcated by dominant sectors of society to justify elite power and the society's established institutions.

Net Zero is a policy target which aims to reduce the total amount of greenhouse gases produced by a company, country or the whole world down to nothing.

Optimism bias is the tendency to see one's own or one's groups' future in a positive light even if information suggests that the positive view is not justified.

Planetary boundaries. A scientific framework that highlights the rising risks from human pressure on nine critical global processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth. Currently six of the nine boundaries are considered to have been transgressed: amount of synthetic substances released into the environment, climate change, biosphere integrity, use of land, freshwater change, biogeochemical flows.

Renewable resources are natural resources that can be replenished over time, unlike non-renewable resources that are finite. Examples include solar, wind, water, and geothermal energy.

Social justice refers to a fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges within a society, where individuals' rights are recognised and protected. It's a concept that emphasises fairness in relations between individuals and social groups and strives for equal access to economic benefits and other social advantages.

Socratic dialogue is a therapeutic strategy used in psychotherapy and counselling that is inspired in Socratic questioning and discussion through open and exploratory questions. It encourages individuals to examine and reflect on their assumptions, preconceptions and beliefs and to consider alternative possibilities about a specific topic. The facilitator (who guides the discussion) can use challenging statements which may not reflect their opinions, for example through irony. These are used strategically and intentionally to foster reflection on different perspectives by inviting the interlocutor to identify inconsistencies in their own discourse and develop new knowledge (e.g., about themselves or some aspect of the world). It is used to promote critical thinking, conscientisation, intellectual developmental, and self-knowledge through a co-constructive dialogue in a cooperative relationship.

Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain or support a system, process, or activity over time without depleting resources or causing significant harm. It encompasses environmental, economic, and social aspects, aiming to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are the 17 interconnected goals set out by the United Nations which aim to achieve global peace and prosperity for people and the planet by 2030. These encompass environmental, economic and social sustainability dimensions.

Values-based career is a career path chosen not solely for income or status, but because it aligns with a person's ethical, social, or environmental values.

Vulnerability is the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.

Weather describes the short term (daily or weekly) changes of the average and variability of temperature humidity, wind etc. This is a part of the climate, but the two terms are not synonymous.



1

WHY DO WE NEED GREEN GUIDANCE?

A transition to a low-carbon, greener economy will imply the creation of new jobs in environmentally friendly production processes and outputs, whereas other jobs will be at risk, in particular in those sectors with fewer options for a transition towards a more sustainable ways of production.

International Labour Organization

*Every day that goes by in which we don't do something about it is a day wasted.
If we don't act now, it'll be too late.*

David Attenborough

When we turn on the news, we increasingly hear stories about the environmental crisis. And in our daily lives we are frequently assailed by requests to recycle, buy green products and think about our 'carbon footprints'. The noise can leave us feeling paralysed and unsure about what to do. What actions will really make a difference to such a massive problem. And there are so many different perspectives on this issue. Even if we filter out the climate change deniers and conspiracy theorists, there is still such a range of opinion out there about what the situation is and what we should do about it.

In the first quote above, the International Labour Organization suggests that policy responses to the environmental crisis will have some important impacts on the area in which we all work (that of work, skills, employment and careers). It is viewed as a problem that needs careful management, but which can be successfully managed in the best interests of everyone.

In the second quote, the broadcaster and naturalist David Attenborough tells us that time is running out. We must act quickly and with a purpose.

Another quote from former US president Barack Obama is also worth thinking about as we start on our journey into green guidance.

We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it.

Reflection

How do you feel about the kinds of environmental problems that the world is facing? Are you feeling optimistic that this is a problem that we can do something about or frustrated that despite all the talk no one is doing enough? Or perhaps you feel a bit of both.

Do you feel relieved that the level of ecological awareness amongst people is increasing, or angry that people and governments still aren't taking enough action?

How much do you feel that climate change is a problem that will impact on people's careers? And what do you think that your role is as someone who is involved in helping people to deal with career issues and challenges?

Starting with the science

As we have already said there are a vast array of different opinions out there about the environmental crisis. But it is important to start this handbook by setting out the fact that there is a very clear scientific consensus on what is happening to the planet and its climate.

This consensus is the starting point for any serious discussion about what the response should be, whether that is the political response or the way that careers practitioners can address these issues in their practice.

So, this is what we know...

- **The planet is heating up.** Over time the average temperature on the planet Earth has changed through a variety of natural processes. But since the industrial revolution it has been going up rapidly in a way that isn't possible to explain in any other way than that human activities (largely the burning of carbon) are to blame.
- **Global warming means more extreme weather.** The warming of the planet doesn't mean that we will have more sunny days. Changes in the temperature lead to increases in the number of extreme heat-waves, droughts and tropical cyclones and to more rain and flooding, the melting of the polar ice caps and the rising of the sea. It is very likely that if warming continues there will be further, and unexpected, variations in the weather.
- **We are moving towards 1.5 degrees of global warming.** The Earth is now about 1.2 degrees above the pre-industrial average, but 2024 was more than 1.5 degrees above the average. This is worrying as most climate policy views 1.5 degrees of warming as the threshold after which the impacts become increasingly dramatic. The average temperature is continuing to rise.
- **We should expect 2.5-3.5 degrees of warming in the near future.** Based on current (insufficient) progress on tackling climate change, the world is expected to continue to warm, with temperatures reaching between 2.5-3.5 degrees above the pre-industrial average.
- **The impacts of global warming are severe.** Many of the impacts will be experienced as catastrophic weather events in the first instance. But, in the long run global warming is likely to create crop failures, water shortages and the loss of useable land. These will in turn lead to major impacts including famines, war, large scale migration and increase risks of disease.
- **Global warming is likely to increase inequality.** Many of the effects of climate change will impact on poorer people and countries and those with less power and resources. Climate change is a major limiter of social justice and decent work.
- **The environmental crisis is bigger than the warming of the climate.** Climate change is just one of several planetary boundaries we are breaching. Biodiversity is collapsing as habitats are destroyed, species go extinct, and ecosystems are destabilised — threatening food systems, health, and resilience. Oceans are acidifying due to CO₂ absorption, harming coral reefs and marine life, which millions of people rely on for food and income. Land systems are being transformed through deforestation, industrial agriculture, and urban sprawl, reducing the planet's ability to absorb carbon and maintain ecological balance. Freshwater availability is declining, as rivers dry up, aquifers are overused, and pollution damages water quality — affecting drinking water, farming, and biodiversity.
- **This is a planetary emergency.** We are pushing the Earth system beyond its safe operating space. Acting on climate change means also protecting biodiversity, restoring natural systems, conserving water, and rethinking how we live, work, and use land.

So even if climate change was reversed, we still face a wide range of other environmental problems. The urgency to act on the climate should also remind us that we need to stop species becoming extinct, improve the quality of the air, clean up the oceans and address a host of other environmental problems.

All of this could be cause for despair, but before you give up, we also want to give you two more facts that are much more hopeful.

- **We know what is causing climate change and the other environmental crises.** The changes that we are experiencing are not mysterious. We know what is causing these problems. Burning fossil fuels and increasing energy consumption, coupled with reducing the planet's capacity to absorb carbon (e.g., cutting down forests), means that the amount of carbon in the atmosphere is increasing. As carbon increases in the atmosphere, it acts like a greenhouse trapping heat and leading to global warming. Similarly, we have a good understanding of the ways in which pollution, urbanisation, over-use of water and a variety of other processes are all contributing to the environmental crisis.
- **We know how to stop global warming.** Putting it simply we just need to stop burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) and do a range of things to start absorbing some of the carbon that is in the atmosphere, e.g., planting more trees and stopping polluting the oceans. We don't want to under-estimate how difficult this is, for example, to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, we should be emitting less than 2.3 tons of CO₂ per person every year. Yet, currently, the average European's carbon footprint is around 10 tons, so dealing with this requires some big changes. There is a big role for the development of new technologies such as new forms of energy, carbon capture and increased energy efficiency, but technological change will not be able to solve climate change alone. We also need widespread behaviour change and changes in policy. Some would argue that the changes that are needed to stop climate change require a fundamental reorganisation of society to ensure that it is less driven by the desire for big profits for the rich and more focused on the thriving of humanity and the natural world. We will be exploring some of these debates in this handbook.
- **We also know what is damaging other life-supporting systems and how to protect them.** Just as we must stop burning fossil fuels to tackle climate change, we also need to take action to restore and protect the Earth's other life-supporting systems. This includes the preservation of habitats for biodiversity, the reduction of pesticide use, limiting land conversion, ending deforestation, shifting to sustainable agriculture, protecting wetlands, reducing water pollution, and changing how we produce and consume. The evidence suggests that by doing this, we could bring the planet back within safe limits and begin the process of healing. These crises are deeply interconnected and the way forward is systemic: shifting away from extractive models and investing in a society that regenerates ecosystems and ensures human well-being for all.

So, the situation with climate change and other forms of environmental destruction is a clear and present danger to our lives and our planet. While there is scientific debate about exactly what is going to happen and how fast, the existence of human-influenced climate change and other forms of environmental destruction are FACTS and the consensus is that we are already feeling the effects and that these are going to intensify over the next few years and decades.

It is time to act and to act fast. So, in this handbook we are going to discuss what careers practitioners can do to address these issues and contribute to the solution. We are not saying that it is all our responsibility or that we have the power to change everything on our own. Rather we are arguing that we can play a part in dealing with this major environmental challenge and that we have a responsibility to our professional values, our clients and the planet to do so.



Further reading

Inevitably the information that we have presented just provides a very brief overview. We would suggest that the following sources will be useful for those who want to get into further detail.

[The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change and it is considered the most authoritative global body on this subject.

Another very reliable source of information is the [World Meteorological Organisation](#) which monitors weather and climate.

[ClimateWatch](#) brings together a wide range of international data in a way that allows you to drill down and see what is going on in your country.

If you are interested in teaching materials that address the environmental crisis there are also a range of good starting points. The [World Wildlife Fund](#), [STEM learning](#) and [Water Aid](#) all offer good resources. The educational charity SEED have put together a list of [all the educational resources](#) that they have identified which address climate change.

For a more comprehensive understanding of the ecological crisis, you can explore the concept of [planetary boundaries](#) and [Doughnut Economics](#), which together offer a framework for assessing the impacts of human activity in relation to both environmental limits, justice and human well-being.

Environmental crisis and careers

Hopefully we have convinced you (if you needed convincing) that the environmental crisis is serious and that it needs to be addressed, but you may feel that this is not directly related to your work. You are not a climate scientist, politician or renewable energy engineer, you are a careers practitioner and so what is it to do with you?



Reflection

As a career practitioner, you may think that this whole climate-thing is outside the realm of the job you are supposed to do, which is helping people develop and learn and find meaningful work. But when we stop to think about it, can we really compartmentalise these things?

One of the participants in the Exploring Green Guidance project, Ingrid Bårdsdatter Bakke, has examined the [relationship between career and democratic values](#). She argues that working with career guidance is inherently a straightforward way of working for a better society, because helping individuals find their way to participate in society and better their conditions means that people who are helped by career guidance can use their resources to build a better society and better the conditions for the next guy. So, as a career practitioner, you are already working with a lot more than just the individual in front of you. By helping them, you are also taking care of their family and their community. One could even say that when career guidance helps people thrive in communities and societies, enabling them to experience citizenship, participation, worth, and meaningfulness, career guidance practitioners are also building a better society for *themselves*.

In other words, it is impossible to separate the individual from their context, and as climate change is very much real and affecting people's lives, you don't have to be an 'activist' or be 'radical' if you are concerned with the climate. You are also a citizen in society, and you and your client or students share the same reality of having to deal with the green shift as it is happening.

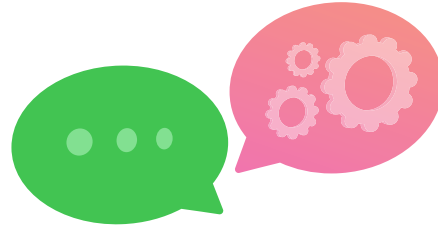
As careers practitioners we are interested in what jobs and opportunities are available for our clients and in helping them to make decisions that will allow them to find the best possible path forwards into their future. Given this we must be aware of all the social, political and economic trends that are likely to shape the future of work.

The environmental crisis is arguably the single most important trend that will shape how people live and work in the future. We would argue that this will work in two main ways.



The environment is changing

As these changes happen to the climate, the biosphere and the wider environment they will have implications for the way work is organised.



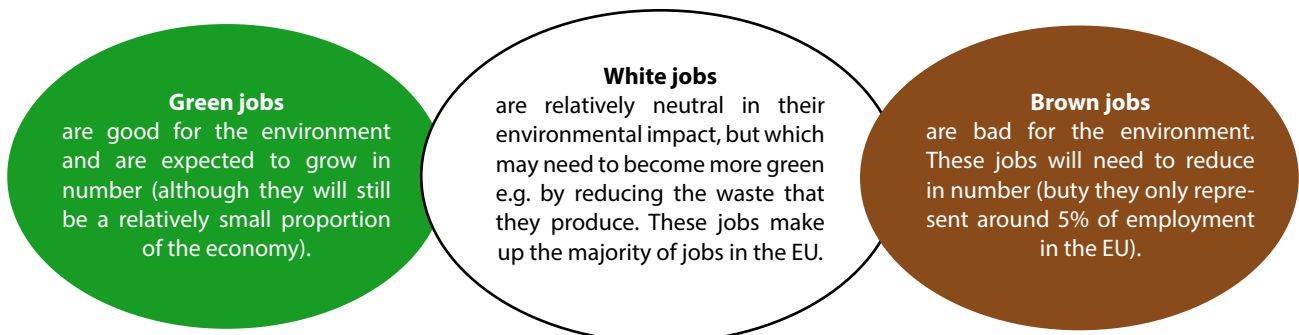
We are responding

Governments, businesses and individuals are all responding in different ways to these changes. How we respond will also shape the organisation of work in our society.

The environmental crisis is a dynamic process that is intertwined with the way that we live and work. As the temperature rises, farming will become more difficult and the way that the agricultural sector works will change. As the seas rise, people will be displaced leading to higher migration and changes to the labour market in places which receive these migrants. And as governments focus on renewable energy, flood management or dealing with pandemics new types of jobs will be created.

So, the environmental crisis is going to radically change the jobs that are available, the way work is organised and which jobs are desirable for our clients. People's decisions about what skills they develop and what jobs they pursue are therefore likely to be critical to societies ability to manage climate change.

The European Union has classified all jobs into three categories which it calls green, white and brown.



These categories give us a new way to think about and talk about the jobs and careers that our students and clients are thinking about. But it also highlights that thinking about careers and the environment is a bit more complex than just telling people to leave brown jobs (e.g., those involved in extractive industries) and move to green jobs (e.g., working in recycling).



Critical corner

Do you believe that we can fix climate change within the present economic system? For commentators in the mainstream solving climate change is just about shifting the incentive structure so that capitalism adjusts to recognise the damage that it is doing to the environment. But for others the whole idea of economic growth is problematic since it is rooted in models that prioritise short-term profit at any cost, negatively impacting the environment and workers.

These concerns have led to the development of the concept of sustainable growth and, more radically to degrowth movements. These movements propose that continuous growth is untenable and that we can only achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental practices by deescalating production and consumption.

How radical do you think that we need to be to both protect the planet / nature and people's well-being? The environmental crisis is a key part of the context for all work and for all career decision making over the next few years. Given this it is important for careers practitioners to think about how they respond to this... and this is where 'green guidance' comes in.



Further reading

A lot of academic and policy literature has been published which looks at the relationship between work and the climate. Some interesting papers include the UK Climate Committee's [A Net Zero workforce](#), the International Labour Organization's work on [Climate change and jobs](#) and the EU's paper [The possible implications of the green transition for the EU labour market](#).

Green guidance

People's jobs and careers are going to be affected by the environmental crisis and by an attempt by governments and businesses to respond to these changes. Furthermore, the way people engage with the environment through their work can, in various and complex ways, both contribute to its destruction and to its preservation.

In other words, not only does the environment provide a key context for people's careers, people shape the environment through their career choices and their decisions about how they live and work. This has led many people to argue that we need to better understand how these are interconnected and to acknowledge that career choices and career management are important parts of thinking about how to address the environmental crisis. And this has led to consideration of what the role of careers practitioners should be in raising these issues with people and supporting them to deal with them.

The term 'green guidance' was first used in the 1990s by a Danish researcher called Peter Plant. Peter is a committed environmentalist, careers practitioner, academic and campaigner, who brought a lot of ideas together onto the idea of 'green guidance'. He argued that career guidance had to take a stance in relation to the environmental crisis and that such a stance should be *'pro-active, questioning, probing, reflexive, and human-centred'* and address career decision making as part of *'personal commitment, societal involvement, and meaningfulness'*. This handbook is built on Peter's work.

More recently a wide range of other writers have got involved in discussing green guidance. Miriam Dim-

sits and Tristram Hooley have developed the following definition for green guidance.

„Environmentally sustainable career guidance empowers individuals, groups and collectives to develop their lives and careers in ways that do not compromise the ability of other people nor future generations to meet their needs. It recognises that human beings are a part of an ecosystem which is valuable in its own right, and that all lifeforms, particularly the lives of the most vulnerable are threatened by a growing climate crisis, the depletion of biodiversity and other environmental damage caused by human action.

Environmentally sustainable career guidance builds individual and community capacity to analyse, respond to, and address social, environmental and career problems whilst supporting people to build a good life for themselves and others. Fundamentally it aims to stimulate people’s imagination and empower them to find their way to a better life and a sustainable world.“

We find this a useful starting point for this handbook but recognise that it opens up as many questions as it resolves. Even if you accept the argument that green guidance is needed, that it is possible and that it is something that we should give priority to, the question remains as to how it can be done. It is to this question that the current handbook is primarily addressed.



Further reading

If you want to get an insight into Peter Plant’s thinking then we would suggest listening to him on this [podcast](#) or reading his article [Paradigms under pressure](#).

About this handbook

This handbook has been developed by the *Exploring Green Guidance* project, which is an EU funded project which brought concerned careers practitioners and researchers from five countries together to develop new resources for green guidance. The project began with a review of policy in the area of education, employment and the environment and a literature review of the evidence on green guidance. We then undertook a survey of European guidance practitioners to find out what the current state of play was and to invite people to suggest ideas and resources. Finally, we organised a series of ‘innovation factories’ which were practitioner groups in each of the countries who explored the issue of green guidance and developed ideas and tools that could help others. All of this work has then been distilled together into this handbook.



Further reading

If you are interested in the work of the Exploring Green Guidance project and in reading some of the background research, then visit the [Exploring Green Guidance](#) website.

You might also want to read the [Evidence on green guidance](#) paper that we produced as part of this project.

The handbook is organised into seven chapters. In each you will find a discussion of the issues, links to key resources, guidance on the use of the tools that we have created and opportunities for reflection. We hope that it will be enough to get you started on green guidance.

There is not only one right way to 'do' green guidance. You will have to work out how you want to do it and think about how it can fit into your context. So, feel free to adapt, develop and change the ideas and resources that we offer in the handbook.

The handbook addresses the following topics.

1. In this *first chapter* we have tried to make the case that there is a need for green guidance and to argue that it is something that you should get involved in.
2. The *second chapter* deepens the discussion of green guidance and explores what it is and why it is necessary. It also explores different approaches to green guidance and thinks about some of the debates that exist within this idea as to how radical career guidance should be.
3. In the *third chapter* we explore how our students and clients feel about these issues and consider what this means for our practice. We might be dealing with everyone from climate deniers to eco-warriors as well as a large group of people who have not given these issues any serious thought. How can we address environmental issues whilst also connecting to people's immediate concerns about their lives.
4. In the *fourth chapter* we focus on the ethical and practical limits to green guidance. What is it that you shouldn't do when you are practicing green guidance and how can you deal with the limits that are placed on your actions by managers or funders.
5. In the *fifth chapter* we look at the ways in which green guidance has been done (or proposed to be done). What does a 'green' career counselling session look like, or a green careers workshop or careers fair. We build on these examples of practice to offer a practical model that you can use and adapt in your practice. This chapter particularly focuses on the ways in which we can work with individuals and groups.
6. In *chapter six* we explore how we can move beyond our immediate practice context and engage in more systemic forms of action like brokerage, advocacy, lobbying and system change. We argue that all of these wider forms of practice can still be thought of as part of green guidance as our focus remains on helping people to build good and sustainable careers in ways that do not compromise the ability of other people nor future generations to meet their needs.
7. Finally in *chapter seven* we review what we have covered and think about what some next steps might be.

Throughout the handbook you will see some recurring features that we have already used in this chapter.



Tools. These are new tools that we have developed through the project (often drawing on the excellent practice that we have found out there). These are available for you to access, download and adapt.



Reflections. These are designed to get you thinking about some of the issues that we are raising. In some cases, it may be possible to adapt these reflections to use them with your students and clients.



Critical corners. This is where we propose to think about some of the disagreements and challenges that exist around environmental and sustainability issues. In these sections we will ask you to consider how radical you need to be and whether you think that it is even possible to build a green career within the current system.



Further reading. Each chapter includes a range of sources of further information that you can do to if you want to explore these issues in a deeper way.

Summary

In this chapter we have learnt that:

- **the planet is heating up** and that this, and a range of other environmental problems have been caused by human activity. This is already causing problems for the planet and these problems are likely to continue to get worse unless we do something about them;
- **we know what is causing the environmental crisis *and how to respond to it***. But so far efforts to halt or reverse environmental damage have been insufficient. There is a need to act and act quickly;
- **the environmental crisis is intertwined with our jobs and careers**. Changes in the environment and attempts to mitigate or counter-act this crisis are all likely to shape the kinds of work available and how we work. Furthermore, individual's career decisions will also shape the capacity that society has to address the environmental crisis;
- **green guidance has been developed as a way of addressing these issues within the field of careers**. Green guidance sets out an approach for careers practitioners which is designed to help individual, groups and collectives to manage their careers in ways that are sustainable;
- **this handbook will help careers practitioners to engage with and deliver green guidance**. There is no single approach to green guidance, but this handbook will take you through a wide range of practical approaches to delivering green guidance and encourage you to innovate and develop your own approach.



Reflection

Having read the first chapter, how are you feeling about green guidance? Do you think that it is something that you are interested in and want to start doing? Or do you have more questions than answers at this stage?

One thing to reflect on carefully at this point is whether you are already doing anything that might be seen as green guidance.

2

WHAT IS GREEN GUIDANCE?

What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

Jane Goodall, Scientist and activist

Imagine a 27-year-old mining surveyor from Silesia in Poland, a region historically tied to the coal industry, walking into your office. Aware that the government are keen to reduce the country's reliance on coal, she knows that her region will undergo a significant transformation in the coming years. She feels uncertain about her future, recognising that she may soon lose her job, yet she remains open to change.



Reflection

How confident and prepared do you feel today to guide a client like this mining surveyor through this career transition?

This scenario illustrates why integrating green guidance into normal career guidance practice has never been more important. The green transition is reshaping labour markets across Europe, placing careers practitioners at the forefront of supporting individuals through these changes.

Our work doesn't just impact individuals, it influences entire communities facing transition. As industries move away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy, career guidance becomes a vital bridge between uncertainty and new, sustainable career opportunities. More broadly, given the urgency of the ecological crisis, can we really make career choices without thinking about how our work affects the others, the future generations and the planet? Can the sustainability dimension be integrated *by default* into career guidance, rather than treated as an optional concern? And how can career guidance play a significant role in fostering a fairer and more sustainable labour market?

This chapter discusses the importance of green guidance and presents specific strategies and tools to effectively incorporate sustainability into career counselling practice, thus contributing to this broader transformation.



Further reading

Many national and international bodies produce labour market information that discusses not only what is happening now, but also what is likely to happen in the future. It is worth looking for these sources of information in your country but also viewing such predictions with a critical eye. No one knows exactly what is going to happen next, so it is important that we support our clients to read the labour market themselves and encourage them to be ready to adapt to new situations as they emerge.

Some useful starting points for thinking about the labour market include the International Labour Organization (ILO) which has published a useful series on the [future of work](#) and on [global trends for youth](#) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which also publishes information on the [future of work](#). There are also reports that specifically focus on the future of work in the green transition from the [European Training Foundation](#), [International Monetary Fund](#) and a range of other organisations.

Different approaches to green guidance

Green guidance is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It is a dynamic and pluralistic space where different narratives about success, prosperity, and the future coexist and often clash. As the labour market transforms rapidly due to technological advances, economic shifts, and accelerating environmental crises, careers practitioners are called to move beyond conventional models and explore alternative visions of work, the economy, and social participation.

Traditional career models were largely shaped in the industrial 20th century. They typically followed a linear and hierarchical path which viewed people's careers as a process of climbing the 'career ladder' and equated success with long-term stability, rising income, and managerial status. This model assumed predictability and job security, particularly in manufacturing and clerical work sectors.

Today, these assumptions no longer hold. Many workers, especially those in manual trades and lower-level white-collar roles, are increasingly exposed to uncertainty. One cause of this is climate-related disruption such as industry transformations, resource scarcity, or the transition away from fossil fuels. The environmental crisis adds a further, and often destabilising, layer to an already volatile employment landscape. Furthermore, the fact that many forms of work contribute to environmental harm forces us to question the very foundations of our professional practice.

In this context, green guidance must help individuals navigate these overlapping insecurities. It requires unpacking the often-unspoken narratives that shape career thinking, such as the idea that career success depends on individuals' ability to secure stable, full-time, and high-paying employment, and supporting people in identifying paths that align with their values, aspirations, and the changing realities of the planet.

People often operate under assumptions that might no longer function in a world of environmental crisis and the green transition. Examples of such assumptions include:

- the belief that success requires maximum efficiency and rapid promotion, which can prevent individuals from reflecting on or respecting their own pace of development;
- associating success with constant growth and consumption, while a more sustainable approach

- prioritises well-being and work-life balance;
- viewing competition as the primary motivation, which may lead to stress and burnout—whereas democratic collaboration and co-designing solutions may offer a better alternative;
- conformity and fear of stepping outside established norms, while self-reflection and autonomy can help build careers that align with personal values;
- the narrative of constant change and rapid adaptation to the market, which can create chaos—whereas regenerative work models focus on long-term sustainability and development in harmony with ecological principles.

So, green guidance is not just about analysing labour market trends; it is about supporting clients to build their professional futures in a conscious, sustainable, and value-driven way.

As careers practitioners, we can help clients identify the narratives influencing their career decisions and assess whether these serve them well. Key questions to facilitate this process include:

- What values guide my career choices?
- Is my vision about what I want to achieve in my life aligned with my personal beliefs?
- What alternative career models could I explore?
- What kind of work makes me feel proud or useful in my community?
- Whose needs are served by the goods / services I produce?
- Who benefits when I push myself to go faster or work harder? Does it benefit me?
- If I could build a stable, meaningful rhythm in my work, what would it look like?
- What would my career look like if I didn't feel the need to 'climb the ladder'?
- Has competing with others ever made me feel lonely or disconnected?
- What is the impact of my work on the community, on the environment, on the planet?

Once we become aware of these narratives and their impact on career decisions, we can move on to analysing specific approaches to green guidance and the key dimensions of supporting clients through change.



Which tool?

For examples of tools that can help deconstruct dominant representations of work, see [Sources of my dissatisfaction](#). This critical perspective on work is also interwoven throughout other tools.



Critical corner

Why do you think that we have been socialised into unhealthy beliefs about career success? In whose interest is it to keep us running fast and competing against each other? Is it possible to build green or sustainable forms of work and career whilst also competing with others? How can we balance the needs for cooperation and competition in our lives, careers and societies?

How to implement green career guidance in your practice?

Integrating sustainability into career guidance may initially seem challenging. Should the focus be on practical employment opportunities in green sectors? Or is it more important to support clients in reflecting on their values and making conscious career choices wherever they may work? We will explore these issues practically in chapters 5 and 6, but for now it is important to think through some of the key issues.

Some clients seek concrete solutions such as courses, job opportunities, or information about rapidly growing green industries. Others desire deeper change, exploring alternative models of work and forms of life that go beyond conventional market structures. Both paths are valuable and can complement each other, if they are tailored to the individual needs of clients and their social context.

The green transition is reshaping the job market and client expectations. As a careers practitioner, we may ask ourselves:

- should I focus on helping clients develop 'green' skills, or should I encourage deeper reflection on their values and the impact of their choices?
- is my role to support individuals in adapting to new realities, or should I work towards systemic change?
- should guidance remain neutral, or should I actively promote pro-environmental career choices?

There are no straightforward answers to these questions. The careers practitioner, Rebecca Packer, explored these issues in her Masters dissertation and proposed a four-quadrant model of green guidance.¹ This model is based on two main axes. Firstly, do you focus on the individual or on social and structural issues in your guidance. Secondly, what kind of change do you want to drive? Is it more about helping clients to adapt to the job market (*light green*) or more about helping clients to engage with a deeper transformation aligned with ecological values (*dark green*).

This allows us to distinguish four approaches which we can describe as: *radical*, *progressive*, *conservative* and *liberal*.



¹ Packer, R. (2019). *Greening HE careers education and guidance? An investigation into the perspectives and experiences of career development practitioners from English universities*. Master's Thesis, University of Derby, United Kingdom.

	Social focus	Individual focus
Dark Green (Ecologism)	<p>Radical</p> <p>Your goal is not only to support clients but also to help them recognise that their career choices are part of larger economic and ecological systems.</p> <p>This means emphasising shared responsibility for the future of the planet and supporting movements advocating for a just transition.</p> <p>Practice example: Actively promoting reflections on alternative forms of work (e.g. non-profits and cooperatives), engagement in transformational movements, and utopian thinking (see the tool The reality of our utopia).</p>	<p>Progressive</p> <p>You support clients in making career decisions that align with their ecological values.</p> <p>You encourage them to pursue careers that contribute to sustainable development.</p> <p>Practice example: Ikigai – a conceptual framework that helps clients explore career paths by aligning their passions, values, skills, and the needs of the world.</p>
Light Green	<p>Conservative</p> <p>You focus on preparing clients for the job market—helping them develop the skills needed in the green economy.</p> <p>You support the development of retraining programmes, training courses, and access to new professions linked to the green transition.</p> <p>Practice example: See tools such as Case studies of green transition.</p>	<p>Liberal (Non-Directive) Your goal is to support clients in choosing a career that aligns with their values, without directing them towards specific paths.</p> <p>The client decides to what extent they want to incorporate environmental considerations into their work.</p> <p>Practice example: Introducing optional criteria for career choices that integrate sustainability allowing clients and students to include them if they wish - see the tools (Eco)values and (Eco)skills.</p>

Packer's model suggests that you have some choices to make.

- If you want to prepare clients for the green job market, focus on light green approaches (conservative or liberal).
- If you aim for systemic change and a deeper impact, apply dark green approaches (radical or progressive).
- If you want career guidance to support community-based solutions, choose a social perspective.
- If clients want to align their careers with their personal values, an individual approach might be the best fit.

There is no single 'correct' approach. The choice depends on your career guidance philosophy, your clients' needs, and the context in which you work. In reality you are likely to combine two or more approaches as you work with real clients whose needs will change. But using this model can help you to consciously define your strategy and tailor the guidance you provide to better meet the diverse expectations of your clients and fit with your own ideas about what is needed and what is effective.



Reflection

What do you think of the four approaches to green guidance? Are you more focused on individuals or social needs? Are you feeling more light green or dark green? What do you think that you can learn from other approaches that are different from yours?

Aims for green guidance

After exploring different approaches to green career guidance (light green vs. dark green, individual vs. social), it's time to focus on practical steps: how to integrate sustainability into the daily work of a career advisor?

The Danish career guidance expert Miriam Dimsits has worked with Tristram Hooley from the UK to identify five key dimensions that describe green guidance.² These are designed to help you to move beyond simply directing clients to 'green jobs' and instead guide them toward more conscious career choices. These can effectively function as learning aims for green guidance, helping you to shape interventions in ways that are environmentally sustainable.



2 For more on this framework see Dimsits, M., & Hooley, T. (n.d.). [Introduction to the framework for environmentally sustainable career guidance](#). NICEC.

Dimension	Aim	Examples of actions
Connecting career with the world	Supporting clients in developing an emotional connection with themselves, others, and nature to help them better deal with feelings of alienation, hopelessness and detachment.	Using nature as a career guidance setting Working with existential and experiential approaches Tool example: Identifying moments of resonance
Build solidarity with the world	Encouraging clients to consider their careers within a broader social and ecological context, focusing on collective learning and action for the benefit of the marginalised and threatened lifeforms (people, groups, nature, species, habitats...).	Collective, group oriented or community-based guidance focusing on how we can live and contribute together Tool example: Needs of the world and meaningful career
Learn about careers in a sustainable world	Discussing with clients and students about how the world of work impacts the environment, which careers can contribute positively	Exploring connections between the climate- and environmental crisis and the world of work, exploring environmental impacts of different career paths Providing clients with reliable information about the green job market. Meetings with professionals from green industries Tool example: Looking at the job market through green-tinted glasses
Imagine and invent the world as you career	Help clients to connect their everyday experiences, troubles and hopes to the big social and environmental issues and imagine possibilities and a way beyond the current situation. Encourage them to consider and create alternative forms of work and production	<i>Visualisation exercises</i> – “What would your ideal eco-friendly future look like? What needs to change in the world for this future to be possible?” Tool example: The reality of our utopia
Change the world through your career	Developing clients’ and students’ understanding of the nature of the problem, critical interrogation of dominant ideologies, demasking power structures and actor interests.	<i>Case studies of alternative economies</i> – e.g., Mondragón cooperatives, the Transition Towns movement. <i>Discussions on values</i> in the context of new career models. Tool example: Ecological dialogues



Reflection

- You don't have to apply all the dimensions—choose the ones that best fit your practice.
- You can combine approaches—for example, using the *emotional* dimension for reflection on values and the *learning* dimension to provide information about the green job market.
- If your clients are ready for deeper change, you can incorporate elements of the *imagine and invent* or *change the world* dimensions.

With these dimensions, your career guidance can become more intentional, future-oriented, and aligned with the ecological challenges facing the job market.

Paths towards more sustainable careers

Understanding different approaches to green guidance and how to implement them is just the first step. The next challenge is helping clients see how they can put their career goals into practice in a way that aligns with sustainability.

Every client has unique skills, experiences, and values – which is why it's important to help them to be aware of a variety of paths that allow them to contribute to environmental and social responsibility in a way that fits their capabilities and aspirations. Below are six key green career paths, which can serve as inspiration and a starting point for further exploration.

Traditional green professions

Some people choose careers directly linked to environmental protection. Jobs in earth sciences, sustainability, and renewable energy often require formal education or specialist training.

Examples:

- Environmental engineers restoring post-industrial landscapes.
- Sustainability consultants working on urban green planning.
- Technicians installing solar panels.
- Eco-tourism specialists promoting sustainable travel.
- Sustainable farming and agriculture.

Values-based careers

Others' values may privilege meaning and social justice in other ways, often related to social or community-focused sectors and so people may choose their careers based on these values. While these roles may not always be explicitly 'green', they play a crucial role in building a fairer and more sustainable society.

Examples:

- Social workers supporting communities affected by climate change.
- Teachers integrating environmental education into schools.
- Doctors and nurses promoting sustainable healthcare by reducing medical waste.
- Community garden coordinators combining ecological education with social inclusion.

Eco-entrepreneurship

For some, the path to sustainability lies in starting their own business. These individuals create companies that minimise environmental impact, promote local production, or develop innovative solutions for ecological challenges.

Examples:

- Too Good To Go (Denmark) – a startup tackling food waste.
- Infarm (Germany) – urban vertical farming solutions.
- Zero-waste shop owners providing plastic-free alternatives.
- Regenerative farming initiatives such as AMAP networks in France.

Eco-intrapreneurship

Not everyone wants to change jobs – instead, some people focus on making their existing workplaces greener. Eco-intrapreneurs drive sustainability initiatives within organisations, reducing carbon footprints, implementing green strategies, and engaging colleagues in environmental action.

Examples:

- Sustainability managers helping to cut emissions across supply chains.
- Grassroots green initiatives within large corporations, led by employees promoting eco-friendly practices.
- Environmental auditors advising businesses on reducing their climate impact.

Hybrid or slow careers

Some people redefine their professional lives by cutting down on traditional work hours and dedicating more time to meaningful, sustainable activities. These careers will often blend different forms of work, offering flexibility and deeper engagement in ecological and community initiatives.

Examples:

- Professionals balancing consultancy with permaculture farming.
- Freelancers working on sustainability projects while engaging in climate activism.
- People reducing their paid working hours to dedicate more time to environmental volunteering.

Professional activism

For those who see the environmental crisis as an urgent priority, activism becomes a full-time career. Their work focuses on systemic change, advocacy, and direct action for environmental and social justice.

Examples:

- Employees at Greenpeace (Germany) and Friends of the Earth Europe (Belgium) running environmental campaigns.
- Grassroots movement leaders such as Marjan Minnesma, founder of Urgenda Foundation, an organisation fighting for carbon reduction in the Netherlands.
- Young climate activists organising Fridays for Future strikes.
- Policy analysts and campaigners shaping climate regulations at a national or international level.
- Representative groups and trade unions working on behalf of those working within the green and sustainable economy.



Further reading

The six possible paths that people take in an ecological transition were proposed by Tacchini, S. (2021). [Green guidance: Integrating an ecological vision into career guidance](#). In *Euroguidance Conference 2021 Compendium* (pp. 42–45). OeAD Erasmus+.



Critical corner

The six career paths set out above all focus on getting people to move into a 'green job' or 'green career' of some kind. This is an important aspect of green guidance, but it can't be the whole story. Only a relatively small proportion of the workforce will ever work in a 'green job'. So, what about everyone else? What changes can people make in their life and work to make them greener, even if they are not in a green job?

Perhaps even more importantly how can people exert pressure on their employers and organisations, politicians and the other people in society who are responsible for environmental damage? It is not just a question of choosing a different job, but also of changing the way that the existing labour market works. Of course, this isn't easy as there are a lot of people with strong vested interests in the way society is currently organised and employment and social relationships usually include imbalances of power that our clients will often be at the wrong end of. So, the path to a green career is likely to involve taking on some powerful people and thinking about how to change the world.

How can you discuss these sorts of issues with clients in career guidance?

Summary

- Green career guidance helps individuals and communities adapt to labour market changes driven by the environmental crisis and the green transition.
- Traditional career models are changing and there is a growing demand for work aligned with values, well-being, and sustainability.
- Different approaches to guidance range from helping clients develop green skills to inspiring systemic change.
- Five key dimensions of green career guidance are: connecting career with the world on an emotional level, building solidarity with the world by connecting with others and with nature, learning about careers in a sustainable world, imagining and inventing the world as you career, and changing the world through your career.
- Green career paths include environmental professions, values-driven careers, eco-entrepreneurship, corporate sustainability roles, hybrid careers, and professional activism as well as the struggle in all jobs to make them more environmentally sustainable.

3

HOW DO OUR STUDENTS AND CLIENTS FEEL ABOUT GREEN GUIDANCE?

Climate change is a lot like death. We all understand it is inevitable, but few of us truly accept it.

Brian McDermott

People's support for a given climate policy is strongly predicted by three fundamental beliefs, namely, that the policy is helpful in reducing emissions (effectiveness), does not have adverse distributional impacts by hurting lower-income households (inequality concerns), and does not financially hurt the respondents' household (self-interest).

Antoine Dechezleprêtre and colleagues in the American Economic Review

These quote highlight some of the complex ways that people are feeling about climate change and other forms of environmental destruction and about the solutions that are proposed to these problems. In this chapter we are going to look at how people are feeling about climate change and think about what this means for how we might interact with them in green guidance.

There has been extensive research which has sought to understand public perceptions of environmental issues, including climate change, and levels of concern about the impacts of these issues. In general, there is widespread and growing acceptance amongst the global population of climate science and recognition that there are substantial environmental issues that need to be addressed. However, there is also evidence that environmental and climate beliefs are increasingly linked to wider political positions, with some right leaning voters in developed countries more likely to be sceptical about climate science and the need for political, social and economic changes. This can make it more difficult to address environmental issues in careers practice because we are potentially getting involved in political debates and culture wars.

There is also evidence which suggests that despite people's belief in the importance of sustainability, many people do not make the behavioural changes within their own lives that are compatible with this belief. We certainly saw some evidence of this in our survey, where we found that only 22% of career practitioners reported that their clients raise the climate when making career decisions, although 28% say that their clients are keen to find environmentally sustainable work and 41% say that their clients are keen to live environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

Most of our clients and students do not immediately see the relevance of the environmental crisis to their careers, and even though they might have concerns about green issues, they might not think that a session with a career practitioner is a legitimate place to talk about these issues. The challenge for career practitioners is to meet clients and students where they are, exploring sustainability in ways that resonate with their values, aspirations, and professional realities. From our experience and from the feedback we get from practitioners, this is the most difficult task in the process of 'greening' one's practice.

This chapter provides some ideas about introducing the question of sustainability in career guidance while respecting clients' perspectives, avoiding the ethical pitfalls of shifting the blame for the current crisis onto individual consumer behaviour and lifestyle and creating resistance in this highly politicised topic.



Critical corner

If you want to better understand and contextualise the role and the impact of individual actions and decisions in mitigating climate change and ecological crisis, you can read some of the [Oxfam reports on climate inequality](#) showing that ‘in 2019, the richest 1% were responsible for 16% of global carbon emissions, the same as the emissions of the poorest 66% of humanity (5 billion people)’.

Many clients we encounter in our daily practice come from disadvantaged backgrounds and their carbon footprint is lower compared to the average of the population. Moreover, these clients and students usually have limited means to align their careers and lifestyles with sustainability due to systemic reasons (e.g., lack of opportunities, lack of public transportation, lack of means for a more sustainable food and consumption etc.). So, career guidance can focus on helping them reflect on the systemic nature of the climate change and the ecological crisis and better understand the challenges of climate justice, alongside helping them to develop new skills and navigate the labour market.

Dealing with different perspectives on environmental issues

It is impossible to give a simple one-size-fits-all model for engaging your clients and students in environmental sustainability and green careers. A conversation about green careers with school students requires a different approach than working with adults. Some clients or students might be very concerned about the question of the environmental crisis and be actively trying to live a green life or campaign for local or national change. But, for others, it might be a source of controversy and irritation which could have a negative impact on their engagement with career guidance. It is crucial for career practitioners to adapt their language, their general approach, examples, and methods to the age, situation, level of awareness, motivation and other relevant factors.

To illustrate how we might adapt green guidance to different clients we are going to use a segmentation developed by researchers at Yale and George Mason University to better understand how people perceive and respond to climate change.³ The scientists aimed to segment the population based on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding global warming and created this segmentation to help to identify communication strategies tailored to each group. But we are going to use it to think about how to tailor green guidance.



Reflection

What do you think about this segmentation? Where do you belong as a career practitioner? Does it apply to your clients or students? Are any of the groups more prevalent than others? What are some useful ways that could help you find out into what category your client fits?

Such a model can be particularly useful in career guidance because it helps practitioners understand how to introduce sustainability in a way that resonates with clients’ existing worldviews and makes sustainability discussions feel relevant and practical - whether by highlighting job security, economic trends, or ethical motivations. In the following table, we explore how career practitioners can integrate sustainability into their guidance while respecting diverse perspectives and life circumstances.

3 See Anthony Leiserowitz and colleagues paper [Global warming’s six Americas](#).

What kind of career guidance you are doing is also likely to make a difference to the way in which you can discuss environmental issues. A one-to-one counselling session offers different opportunities to a careers fair or a group session. Group settings offer particular challenges and opportunities in part because you are unlikely to have a whole group that all think the same. In such cases you may want to encourage people to discuss how they are feeling with both those that they agree with and those who think differently from them. We will be discussing the differences between different approaches to practice in more detail in chapters 5 and 6. These are ideas collected from career practitioners within the *Exploring Green Guidance* project. The table is of course not exhaustive, and not all options apply to all specific contexts and cases but it will hopefully serve as an inspiration for your own approach.

Profile	How to approach	How to integrate into green guidance
The Alarmed (Highly engaged and seeking action)	Engage them in active career-building opportunities that align with their strong environmental values.	<p>Acknowledge what they already do for sustainability, even small actions. <i>‘What are you already doing that feels meaningful or helpful to the world?’</i></p> <p>Encourage them to reflect on where and how their work - present or future - can carry meaning and impact. Focus on realistic and gentle next steps. <i>‘In your job (or future/desired job), where could you bring a small positive impact?’</i></p> <p>Offer accessible and relevant information about sustainability in the labour market. Provide examples of ‘greening’ jobs, committed enterprises or local initiatives (not only environmental jobs or activism).</p> <p>Invite them to expand how they think about career success. Foster alternative narratives like career degrowth, slowing down, or choosing jobs that nourish both self and community.</p> <p>Help them explore small forms of agency and leadership. <i>‘How could you help others or set a good example?’</i></p> <p>Introduce them to communities or individuals that can nourish their motivation and hope, connect them to peer support that reflects their background and shows different ways of contributing to a more sustainable world.</p>
The Concerned (Supportive but not yet active)	Discuss accessible ways to integrate sustainability into their career thinking without overwhelming them.	<p>Encourage reflection on their daily work and career choices. <i>‘How does your work connect with what is happening in the world? How do you see your contribution?’</i></p> <p>Explore opportunities within their field or area of interest. Highlight industries adapting to sustainability and introduce upskilling options in green jobs.</p> <p>Help them identify low-barrier, practical ways to integrate sustainability, such as choosing employers with strong ESG policies or incorporating sustainable practices into their current profession or area of studies.</p> <p>Encourage long-term career visioning exercises: <i>‘What will your industry/area look like in 10-20 years due to climate change? Where do you want to be in that future?’</i></p> <p>Reflect with them on small, actionable steps for engagement, like joining professional networks in green sectors or advocating for workplace sustainability initiatives.</p>

<p>The Cautious (Uncertain about climate change, but open to learning)</p>	<p>Use curiosity-driven approaches and highlight the economic benefits of sustainability.</p>	<p>Ask neutral questions: <i>‘What kind of world do you want to live in? What role do you see yourself playing?’</i> Focus on their interests and aspirations rather than climate urgency, to find openings for reflections around sustainability (values, their legacy).</p> <p>Help them explore sector-specific changes driven by sustainability. Example: <i>‘The auto industry is shifting to electric vehicles—what skills will be in demand?’</i> Discuss training options linked to future job stability (if that is one of their concerns) rather than climate necessity.</p> <p>Frame sustainability as a strategic career advantage, emphasising how knowledge of sustainability boosts employability across industries.</p> <p>Encourage exploration over commitment. Example: <i>‘Imagine your profession in a world where sustainability is the norm. How do you think your role would change?’</i></p> <p>Discuss case studies of industry transformations that led to job creation. If possible, mediate opportunities of contact with professionals who have integrated sustainability without drastic career shifts.</p>
<p>The Disengaged (Uninformed or indifferent to climate change)</p>	<p>Connect sustainability to personal career security and relevance rather than moral arguments.</p>	<p>Find a personal hook. Example: <i>‘Have you noticed changes in your industry?’</i> Focus on practical concerns like automation, job stability, or rising energy costs.</p> <p>Discuss workforce trends in their sector without framing them as ‘climate issues.’ Instead of saying <i>‘climate policies will transform your job,’</i> say <i>‘many companies are shifting to energy-efficient practices—this is where hiring is growing.’</i></p> <p>Offer neutral decision-making tools that allow them to weigh sustainability factors without what they might see as an ideological pressure.</p> <p>Avoid abstract futures—focus on immediate opportunities and risks. Example: <i>‘Industries embracing green transitions are getting government funding—how might that impact job growth?’</i></p> <p>Instead of discussing systemic change, focus on personal empowerment. Example: <i>‘How can you future-proof your career by understanding these shifts?’</i></p>

<p>The Doubtful (Skeptical but not hostile)</p>	<p>Use economic and technological arguments, not environmental ones.</p>	<p>Avoid polarising discussions. Instead, highlight economic transitions that impact their field.</p> <p>Use exploratory questions about values that drive clients' and students' career to develop opportunities for follow-up questions.</p> <p>Use real-world examples of industry-led sustainability changes. Example: <i>'Banks are investing heavily in sustainable finance—what does this mean for financial professionals?'</i></p> <p>Avoid guilt-based messaging.</p> <p>Frame sustainability as a competitive advantage rather than an obligation. Example: <i>'How can understanding sustainability policies make you a stronger job candidate?'</i></p> <p>Emphasise leadership as adaptation rather than activism. Example: <i>'How can you help a company stay ahead of market changes?'</i></p>
<p>The Dismissive (Strongly reject climate change narratives)</p>	<p>Avoid direct discussions about climate change. Instead, frame sustainability as innovation, efficiency, and economic resilience.</p>	<p>Focus on personal benefits (cost savings, new technology, energy independence).</p> <p>Highlight job security in evolving industries rather than climate policy. Example: <i>"The auto industry is moving toward electric vehicles - what skills will be most valuable?"</i></p> <p>Frame green skills as business intelligence rather than an ethical choice, focus on labour market information, statistics. Example: <i>"Clients are asking for sustainability reports - knowing how to interpret them can set you apart."</i></p> <p>Focus on technology and efficiency. Example: <i>"How do you see automation and resource efficiency shaping your industry?"</i></p> <p>Carefully open discussion about values, legacy, mission, purpose, social justice to enlarge the thinking about career beyond purely individual sphere.</p> <p>Avoid political framing—discuss resilience, innovation, and staying competitive.</p>

Dealing with environmental issues in different contexts

The same logic that we used in the last section to think about different attitudes to environmental issues, can also be taken in different contexts and with different target groups. Again, we need to think about different ways to engage with different types of clients and to design activities and interventions that might be useful when introducing the topic of sustainability into your practice.

The table below explores this in relation to some of the most common groups that careers practitioners might work with. Of course, not all the clients or students from the same target group will have the same stance and knowledge concerning the ecological crisis, so a differentiated approach is needed.

Target Group	How to Connect	How to integrate into green guidance
<p>Students and youth</p>	<p>Use curiosity and aspiration—connect sustainability to their interests (e.g., tech, fashion, gaming, business, entrepreneurship).</p>	<p>Introduce green careers and highlight sustainability in mainstream industries. Provide insights into future job trends.</p> <p>Help them see career choices as shaping the future. Use career-matching tools (lists of skills, interests...), information resources that include sustainability criteria.</p> <p>Encourage them to rethink what they want to achieve in their career beyond financial gain, and support of alternative imaginaries about desirable work.</p> <p>Support internships, volunteer work, or activism in green sectors, as well as social/communitarian sectors. Connect them with mentorship programs in this field.</p>
<p>Unemployed people</p>	<p>Focus on stability, retraining, and future job demand. Emphasise personal empowerment rather than urgency.</p>	<p>Discuss training in green sectors and reskilling programs. Show job market demand for sustainability-related skills. Promote reflection on how to integrate sustainability into their chosen area of work.</p> <p>Discuss careers with long-term security and personal fulfilment in the green transition sector (while taking care not to create unrealistic expectations by discussing the challenges of the contemporary labour market and employment policies).</p> <p>Critically reflect their experiences of exclusion, pressure to adapt to the labour market, individual responsabilisation to explore how this relates to sustainability.</p> <p>Encourage networking in sustainability-focused industries if they are interested in those; or to network with like-minded people in their area of work. Promote involvement in community projects.</p>

<p>Career changers</p>	<p>Explore how their existing skills transfer to more sustainable sectors or ‘greener’ jobs within their own sector.</p>	<p>Provide insights into industry shifts and green opportunities that align with their experience. Identify training options for upskilling.</p> <p>Help them integrate sustainability factors into decision-making while balancing financial and personal considerations.</p> <p>Challenge traditional career expectations and encourage thinking about jobs which can make positive social and environmental impacts</p> <p>Foster critical reflexion around achievement, competition, growth, “climbing the ladder”...</p> <p>Connect them to professional networks, incubators, and funding sources for green entrepreneurship if they are interested in it.</p>
<p>Older adults</p>	<p>Position sustainability as a way to leave a legacy or mentor younger professionals. Avoid framing it as a “young person’s issue.”</p>	<p>Introduce options for mentoring, consulting, or part-time roles in sustainability fields.</p> <p>Help them balance personal fulfilment with meaningful contributions to society. Explore phased retirement into sustainability-focused roles or roles that integrate it.</p> <p>Encourage them to see their career transition as a way to leave a positive impact for future generations.</p> <p>Explore alternative imaginaries around the desired world of work for future generations</p> <p>Support involvement in sustainability education, policy advocacy, or community leadership roles.</p>
<p>Vulnerable and marginalised groups</p>	<p>Address immediate concerns (financial stability, job access) before introducing sustainability topics. Build trust by acknowledging systemic barriers and promote their knowledge and critical reflection about them.</p>	<p>Identify job opportunities in sustainable industries with inclusive hiring practices. Provide mentorship from diverse professionals.</p> <p>Foster critical reflection around mechanisms of exclusion and marginalisation from their experiences and how this relates to sustainability. Empower clients to make informed career decisions based on both personal needs and societal transformation.</p> <p>Help them envision workplaces that value diversity, equity, and sustainability.</p> <p>Advocate for policies that promote fair access to green jobs. Support grassroots involvement in environmental and social justice initiatives. Advocate for accessibility in the green transition. Support engagement in adaptable work environments.</p>

How to introduce sustainability into your career services

As we've seen, green guidance can be challenging due to the complexity of the issues and the diverse perspectives clients and students may hold. The following strategies, inspired by the participants in our innovation factories, can help you in effectively navigating these discussions:

- **Embrace the role of an explorer in uncharted territory:** Career practitioners should position themselves as facilitators, helping clients and students explore new and emerging relations between their careers and sustainability. Nothing can create more resistance than rigid overconfidence, a know-it-all attitude or a moralising stance. A more humble and open approach can encourage curiosity and openness, allowing clients and students to consider questions, reflections, perspectives and options they might not have previously contemplated. Also, be aware that green guidance is an emerging field – so allow yourself to experiment, try new things and learn from your mistakes.
- **Adopt a collaborative and subjective educational stance:** Sharing personal insights and experiences related to sustainability can create a more authentic and relatable dialogue. This approach positions the career practitioner as a partner in exploration rather than an authoritative figure, which promotes a more open and trusting relationship. By acknowledging your own learning journey, you can encourage clients and students to engage more deeply with the topic.

Recognise that environmental issues are not always the most effective entry point. In many cases, clients are more immediately concerned with experiences of meaninglessness, exhaustion, overperformance, relentless pressure to do more, inequality, health problems, or exploitation at work. These concerns can help open a critical discussion about the representations of work and serve as gateways to conversations about sustainability - because ultimately, all these issues are connected to the broader ecological crisis.

- You should be aware of your own beliefs and emotions regarding the environmental crisis to ensure you do not overshadow the client's perspectives. Striking a balance between authenticity and objectivity allows for genuine interaction without imposing personal views and biases.
- **Focus on opening minds rather than convincing:** The goal of green guidance is to broaden clients' and students' perspectives by helping them to integrate sustainability into their reflection around their career, rather than persuading them to adopt a particular viewpoint or career choice. It is useful to adopt a Socratic dialogue approach that creates a receptive, non-confrontational environment for discussion and fosters curiosity around sustainability, critical reflection about conventional notions of career success, conformity, growth, competition and about how work can contribute to ecological well-being.
- **Start with clients' and students' experiences and opinions:** Engage clients by exploring their current understanding and feelings about climate change and the ecological crisis, how this might relate to their career and their lives. This can make the conversation more relatable and meaningful and aligns with adult education principles of building on existing knowledge and experiences.
- **Provide clear explanations for introducing topics:** Clarify the relevance of discussing sustainability in the context of the client's or students' career development. Discussing how these factors influence industry trends, job availability, and required skills can make the conversation more pertinent and engaging which can then open doors for a more critical reflection on the impact of their choices on the environment.
- **Utilise practical examples and neutral language:** Employing real-world examples and avoiding emotionally charged terminology can make discussions about sustainability more accessible. It is also sometimes possible to connect sustainability topics to everyday matters such as food, heating, and transportation to show that sustainability directly impacts daily living and well-being. You can also explore clients' or students' perceptions of terminology, how they interpret terms like 'climate change' or 'ecological transformation' to uncover underlying beliefs and experiences that influence their career

decisions and will enable you to tailor discussions in a way that resonates with the client's worldview. In some contexts, using neutral language with terms like 'nature', 'earth', or 'planet' may be more effective than politically charged words like 'ecology' or 'climate change'. The goal is to understand how the person sees the world and what is important to them, and then build connections to sustainability from that starting point.

- Address emotional responses, including feelings of threat and anxiety: As a career practitioner, you can refer the client to a more appropriate care when necessary, but also encourage different strategies to help clients deal with feelings of anxiety: engaging in individual or collective pro-environmental behaviour, taking a break from thinking about climate change to avoid information overload, promoting activities that make the person happy, identify positive feelings and experiences (time spent with loved ones, at pleasant events, places), encourage sharing feelings and fears with others, spending time with family, friends, community, support groups of people sharing similar concerns, develop active hope etc. career practitioner. According to the literature, one of the most effective ways to respond to 'eco-anxiety' is through meaningful individual and collective action that contributes to positive societal change.

Use facts and statistics judiciously: While data can be persuasive, it's important to consider clients' or students' readiness and receptiveness to such information. Introducing statistics about job growth in renewable energy sectors or the economic benefits of sustainable practices can be effective when aligned with the client's interests and concerns. Tailoring information to the client's level of receptivity ensures that data serves to inform rather than alienate.



Critical corner

The terminology and concept of 'eco-anxiety' is something that requires more scrutiny. In psychology, anxiety is typically defined as a feeling of worry or unease about uncertain outcomes. However, 'eco-anxiety' reflects feelings (like sadness, anger, and despair) that stem from knowing the likely consequences of climate change and seeing a lack of political action.

Many of these feelings about the environmental crisis are legitimate and fully rational concerns about a serious planetary problem. Because of this, some critics argue that using the term 'eco-anxiety' can individualise and medicalise what is actually a social and political issue and that this may serve to weaken the push for collective change. Other ways to describe the psychological effects of climate change exist in academic literature. In fact, some activists and ecopsychologists prefer the term 'eco-enraged', considering it better expresses a rational response to inaction.



Reflection

Experiment with opening the topic of sustainability with your clients. What goals would you like to set for yourself? What tools and methods would you like to use? In which parts of the guidance process? How could you trace your experimentation, its impact, reaction of your clients and students, to improve your practice in introducing sustainability into your practice?

Summary

In this chapter we have learnt that:

- connecting the topic of sustainability to the specific situation, beliefs and concerns of your clients and students is an essential first step in greening your practice;
- understanding your clients' and students' concerns and attitudes towards climate change and the ecological crisis can be helpful in choosing the right approach;
- there are key principles to respect when opening the questions of sustainability with your clients and students, such as starting with clients' experiences and opinions, focusing on opening minds rather than convincing, introducing new perspectives, embracing the role of guides through uncharted territory, using practical examples and neutral language.



4

IS GREEN GUIDANCE ETHICAL?

Exciting theme! Wondering how it will be carried out in practice without breaking the ethical guidelines for guidance.

Careers practitioner responding to our survey.

I don't think 'Green Guidance' is a useful concept. I suspect it will just be a disguise for smuggling ideology into career guidance.

Careers practitioner responding to our survey.

Our survey of European guidance practitioners found that green guidance is a contentious issue. Although 85% of participants in the survey considered it appealing and 76% valued its potential to help people live sustainable lives, the survey's open questions allowed an understanding of the strong feelings it evokes.

The quotes above offer an insight into these strong feelings. Both refer to a crucial concern mentioned by several practitioners, that of ethical challenges. The first quote asks for guidelines on how to implement green guidance ethically, while the second quote dismisses it as an ideological endeavour. In this chapter we will discuss these different positions, identify ethical objections to green guidance and offer potential ways to deal with these. To explore these issues, we will use practitioner comments, as well as the reflections of the innovation factories' participants, informed by theoretical discussions on the ethics of career practice in general and green guidance in particular.



Critical corner

How do you interpret the second quote and how could we deconstruct this kind of statement? On the one hand, saying that green guidance is an ideological endeavour entails considering that climate change is not a scientific fact.

On the other hand, by denouncing green guidance as ideological, it suggests that career counselling should not address political issues. But we can consider everything as political. And even if we don't, career guidance has been political from its start.

Frank Parsons, considered the grandfather of career counselling, developed it in response to a time of great economic instability, unemployment and inequality, calling for social reforms towards social justice. In his book *Choosing a Vocation*, he highlights that careers practitioners need to discuss ethics and morals with their clients besides facts and data.

This prompts us to ask what people mean when they say that climate change is *political* and to ask whether guidance can really hope to avoid politics all together.

How do you feel about this complex mess of politics, professional practice and scientific facts? How does this connect to your understanding of what is ethical?

Dealing with objections to green guidance

In this section we will present and analyse some of the concerns and objections that were identified by practitioners that answered our survey to try and propose potential strategies to cope with these issues.

Does green guidance hamper critical thinking?

A concern that 'green guidance' becomes an approach that hinders critical thinking, by imposing an obvious good that cannot be examined critically. That the questions will be 'how you can work for sustainability', but not 'why should you work towards sustainability' and 'what other goods should we compromise'.

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

This statement suggests that green guidance will reduce criticality and encourage people to disregard the complexity of climate change.

On the contrary, the aim of green guidance is to develop clients' knowledge and skills in ways that allows for the critical analysis of data and equip them to have their own (informed) opinion. As careers practitioners our role is to promote clients' reflection on what their aims are and how they want to contribute to society and not to tell them about our view of the common good or how each person should behave. And, as we will see further ahead, it must never make people feel like they are individually accountable for what are socio-economic and political problems.

Is green guidance just about pushing people into green jobs?

In our region there are two major sectors that need skilled workers - subsea fish farming and oil. How to give career guidance to PhDs wanting to work in these sectors about the devastating climate effects of these industries?

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

Green guidance does not seek to lead clients to green jobs. In fact, green guidance does not seek to lead clients to any pre-defined job. Career guidance is a process of co-construction in which the careers practitioner offers the client opportunities for exploration, reflection and integration so that they are better prepared to make decisions and develop their life project.

Green guidance must consider the material circumstances of the clients as well as the range of employment and training options that are available in the areas that they can work. This does not mean that if a client wants to work in subsea fish farming or the oil industry, environmental issues become tabu. They are probably already in your client's mind, so they need to be addressed to help them to work through any guilt or anxiety and consider how their values connect to their career choices. This may even help them become aware of opportunities for changing that market or industry and contribute to wider transformations.

How does green guidance come up in practice?

But I wonder how leading we should be in conversations with clients. This can be brought up naturally to the field when we get in a conversation touching on values. I am very unsure when it is my opportunity/duty to raise the conversation of 'green guidance'.

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

This statement offers one possible strategy to overcome practitioners' fears of 'leading' clients, by framing the discussion on environmental issues as a discussion of values. This is a valid approach as values have a big impact on people's careers and therefore are an integral part of career counselling. But we can go further by offering the opportunity for education, exploration, and reflection. According to each client, it may be relevant to discuss racism, unemployment, precarity or inequality. These are all political issues, just as the environment is. As we have already discussed, the environmental crisis and businesses' and governments' responses to this crisis are already reshaping the labour market and the opportunities that exist for people's careers. As a careers professional it is important to feel able to discuss all issues that affect your students' and clients' lives. Therefore, the role of the career practitioner necessarily entails creating strategies to include the world in counselling, without leading the client.

Is green guidance risky for practitioners?

As a civil servant, I ask myself the question of my mandate to work on this issue with the young people I meet. My employer, the state, would have to commission me to work on these issues so that I don't have the impression of being engaged in activism.

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

This statement highlights that many practitioners feel that discussing environmental issues is out of scope for their job. Could bringing this issue up even result in disciplinary action from your employer or lose funding? This is an understandable concern that demonstrates that career practitioners, as workers, experience pressures in their jobs and are afraid to lose them. These pressures are real and must be acknowledged. It is important that career practitioners are aware of what the limits to their remit are and avoid doing anything that might endanger their employment. Green guidance needs to be a collective endeavour, not something that is taken as a lone responsibility by individual practitioners.



Critical corner

Why would an employer be upset about a careers practitioner discussing the future of the labour market; or for discussing how far clients' values and lifestyle preferences are influenced by climate change?

What does it mean if practitioners feel they are not free to conduct their work to the best of their abilities and in line with scientific evidence? Who or which organisations, institutions or systems are making this more difficult? And who or which organisations are benefiting from this?

The pressures that careers practitioners are under reflect forms of oppression that are in themselves unethical and undermine the quality of the work of career practitioners by creating conformity and asking practitioners to adjust to the unjust demands of the context (i.e., internalising the oppression of the employer).

It is also worth highlighting that the above statement presents a negative view of activism, suggesting that being an activist is incompatible with being a professional. But activism (which just means taking action in support of something that you believe in) is very common within professions and is part of the process of advocating for the people that you are working with.

Does green guidance just make people feel bad?

I know I need more information, as I basically think it is important to have ethical guidelines for how our career guidance should 'guide' the idea of which focus job seekers should have. Are we giving our already vulnerable group more to feel guilty about?

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

- This statement reflects a crucial concern on the limits of green guidance. It is paramount to define the limits of green guidance. Green guidance must not:
 - push clients towards green jobs;
 - force political views on clients; or responsabilise clients for climate change, generating further guilt or anxiety on the impact of climate change.

Acknowledging that environmental issues are political, international and multidimensional, can protect career practitioners from simple, individualised solutions.

- In turn, green guidance can promote:
 - knowledge on the interconnection between environmental issues and changes in the labour market;
 - knowledge on green jobs and the challenges these will entail in the future;
 - knowledge on environmental issues and all kinds of jobs and labour market sectors;
 - knowledge on social justice, sustainability and environmental issues and their relationship with the labour market and work;
 - awareness of the complexity of social, economic and environmental issues to be able to understand political positions and policies on these matters;
 - reflection on the relationship between social justice, sustainability and environmental issues and life projects, including career projects



Further reading

Explore the article [Reflections on ethical challenges in green guidance](#) to identify different perspectives on the ethical implications of green guidance. The article argues for the need to acknowledge career counselling's socio-political responsibilities and thus the imperative to address climate change in career guidance as 'an ethical and practical necessity for future career development'.

The moral, social, and political implications of green guidance

I think it's not always clear for career development practitioners how to navigate an 'unbiased' guidance approach to green guidance. Greater clarity on how to support clients achieve their career goals within the broader context of climate change would be good.

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

As we have already discussed, many practitioners have a range of legitimate concerns with green guidance, particularly in relation to ideas about impartiality and neutrality. But, where do these ideas come from and what do they really mean?

Ethics is paramount for careers practitioners since it establishes principles that aim to protect both clients and the practitioner. As part of this, practitioners should be reflexive and develop their self-knowledge so that they become aware of their own bias, prejudices and worldviews and can also be attentive to their clients' prejudices and worldviews. This self-knowledge and awareness prepare practitioners to be careful not to enforce their own views on their clients. But this concern with not enforcing the practitioners' worldview does not mean these cannot be shared. The main issue is that there must be a profound respect for clients' autonomy and agency so that clients make their own decisions with no influence from practitioners. And real agency and autonomy are only possible through access to knowledge about the world in which we live in and on our relationship with it.

Practitioners should develop clients' knowledge about educational and labour market opportunities as well as about inequalities and promote reflection on the potential consequences of decisions. This means that practitioners will need to bring up complicated topics, explore various possible scenarios and challenge clients to reflect on these topics and the potential consequences of these different scenarios and decisions.

Impartiality does not mean that green guidance should not address complicated, political, issues. We should not enforce our worldviews but we can expand clients' worldviews. To do this we are likely to have to 'put all the cards on the table' and explore them one by one, addressing feelings, ideas, plans, and how they will work out, or not, in the contemporary world.

On the other hand, green guidance has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing of the client. Some authors consider it also has the responsibility to promote the common good and social justice. In this sense, green guidance becomes an ethical imperative. One of the participants in the survey stated:

Green career guidance is a very exciting concept in my opinion. What is it ethically correct for us as career practitioners to get involved in? And seen from another side: can we defend not getting involved?

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

This statement reflects the French career guidance professor, Jean Guichard's [challenge to career practitioners](#): *Will we continue to collaborate in supporting the forms of work that undermine the future of the planet? Or can we promote the creation of active life forms that lead to sustainable development by decent human activities?*

We might reflect that it is difficult to promote the wellbeing of a client if we are ignoring the environmen-

tal, socioeconomic or political circumstances that impact that client in the present and will continue to do so in the future. Individual wellbeing is intertwined with collective, social wellbeing and the environment.

For example, picture a client who became unemployed during a moment of economic instability and austerity and has started to blame themselves as responsible for this situation. They may be feeling that they are not good enough and that they have caused this crisis in their career. In such a situation it is relevant for the careers practitioner to discuss the socioeconomic and political circumstances that have contributed to this situation. If they were only to focus on the client's 'employability' and adaptation to the labour market without discussing the context, they would risk contributing to these feelings of inadequacy and self-blaming.

Reflecting on this kind of situations demonstrates that neutrality and disengagement from the political context can actually result in the careers practitioner being complicit with a socioeconomic and political context that undermines people's wellbeing. And it is not in the best interest of the client, so if the practitioner ignores this, they are not truly promoting the wellbeing of the client. So, we can discuss the moral and ethical implications of *neutral* or *impartial* forms of career counselling as contributing to the reproduction of systems of oppression and inequality.

Career counselling is dependent on socioeconomic and political circumstances since these inform the organisation of the labour market and influence how people experience their work, careers and their lives. Environmental circumstances have started to influence the social organisation of work and thus, the individual experience of work and careers. So, not questioning the way the macrosocial (i.e., environmental, social, economic and political) system influences mesosystems (i.e., organisations) and microsystems (i.e., individuals) is a form of contributing to the reproduction of, for example, inequality in the labour market, or of disregarding the environmental impact of specific industries on the planet or on workers' health.



Critical corner

Consider some of the arguments about neutrality and politics that have been made in this chapter.

Can we truly guarantee that our interventions promote the wellbeing of our clients if we do not consider how the world impacts their wellbeing and do not promote their own awareness of that?



Further reading

Isaac Prilleltensky's classic book *The morals and politics of psychology* was originally published in 1994 by the State University of New York Press. It still makes for very interesting reading for those struggling with the issues discussed in this chapter.

Tristram Hooley's [Impartiality: A critical review](#) offers a shorter discussion of the issues with particular reference to career guidance.

Guidelines for ethical green guidance

Based on the discussion so far it is possible to set out a series of guidelines for ethical green guidance.

- Green guidance should not:
- direct clients to any pre-defined job;
- enforce the worldviews of the careers practitioner or their employer or funder;
- put disproportional focus on individual decisions and actions, without taking into account the systemic and economic factors;
- only discuss environmental issues;
- only discuss the socioeconomic and political context;
- aim to make all clients into activists (unless they want to develop their career in this way); or
- aim to make clients adapt to the labour market (i.e., make clients adjust to an unjust world).

Green guidance should:

- be based on facts;
- offer opportunities for the critical analysis of data to promote reflexivity in decision-making;
- be based on the respect for clients' autonomy and agency;
- be based on practitioners' reflexivity (self-knowledge and awareness on their own bias, prejudices and worldviews);
- educate clients on the interconnection between sustainability/environmental issues and social justice, the labour market, as well as individual life projects;
- address and discuss complicated socioeconomic, environmental and political topics, exploring possible scenarios and their potential consequences, promoting the capacity to understand political positions and policies on these matters;
- promote awareness of unequal power relations in society and their impact on individual experiences and wellbeing;
- consider the material opportunities available for the client as well as what constrains their power;
- promote the wellbeing of the client, which entails considering the common good, social justice and the wellbeing of all living things.



Critical Corner

In the article [Critical psychology and career development](#) Prilleltensky and Stead propose an ecological definition of wellbeing that includes five sites of wellbeing (individual, relational, organisational, communal and environmental). The authors then move to analyse oppression in the workplace and how psychology and career counselling, by focusing on individual strategies to cope with career challenges, are disregarding the impact of the socioeconomic and political context and contributing to feelings of inadequacy and guilt in the face of failure.

It is within this scope that the *Adjust–Challenge Dilemma* emerges which may reflect the following inner dialogue: *‘I know the system is unjust, but what can I do? I’m only one person. Besides, I studied how to help individuals, not how to change systems of injustice. For that, there are social movements and political parties. I really wish I could help eliminate discrimination and classism but I need to be realistic. What I can do is to help the individual client who works with me.’*

The authors argue that careers practitioners can respond to this challenge by considering the role that power plays as they seek to understand their clients’ experiences. Career guidance then needs to actively acknowledge, address and challenge power and the status quo.

Green guidance for an ethical career counselling

As we have seen so far, there are lots of debates about the ethics of green guidance and a wide array of theorists and researchers who have investigated this issue. Much of this work emphasises that issues of context and the wider world have always been part of guidance and stresses that all green guidance is doing is acknowledging this and actively encouraging consideration of an issue that is going to matter for everyone - see Kavková and Šprlák’s article [Reflections on ethical challenges in green guidance](#).

They identify other writers who emphasise that there are issues of justice and politics which ask careers practitioners to take a side if they are going to support the wellbeing of their clients. As Roe puts it in [Green Guidance](#), this is about thinking *‘more deeply about whose interests we serve, what it is we should be seeking to achieve for the individual and society, and what contribution we can make in relation to a “green” justice future, and present’*. This is about the consideration of collective forms of wellbeing that account for what Rochat calls the ‘needs of the world’ in the article [Éco-orientation](#). For Peter Plant in his article [Paradigms under pressure](#), it entails a change in the paradigm of career guidance, fundamentally rethinking it to ensure that it acknowledges and embraces its responsibility to contribute to social justice and to sustainable future.

We acknowledge the complexity of what we are proposing. Bringing the environment into career guidance requires some rethinking of the responsibilities of the careers practitioner. This entails questioning some of the assumptions that we have internalised. So, we would like to conclude this chapter by emphasising the consensus that has already been generated on these issues with the example of the [International Association for the Educational and Vocational Guidance Communiqué on the Contribution of educational and vocational guidance to support sustainable development and the necessary socio-ecological transition](#) (IAEVG, 2023): ‘it is urgent that we also consider the interconnections of contemporary practices and careers on the ecology and the environment’. Indeed in the associations’ 2017 update of its [Ethical guidelines](#) it stressed the importance of considering the impact of social, economic, environmental and political circumstances on clients’ careers and experiences.

The counsellor shall continually reflect in his or her practice the humanistic principles that underpin ethical conduct and take into account changing social and political issues that have ethical implications for practice. How should educational and career counselling services ethically respond to the global tension between economic and environmental issues in clients' work lives and workplaces?

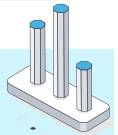


Reflection

Consider the following two case studies and think about what you consider to be the issues. How would you handle a similar issue?



Case study 1

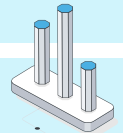


A careers practitioner at the national employment services is going to start facilitating a group for long-term unemployed people. The workshop is titled 'Employability skills to succeed in the labour market'. During the first session, while presenting the aims of the workshop and each session (e.g., preparing a CV for success, preparing a personal pitch for networking, a guide to acing an interview, market yourself like a product, developing an entrepreneurial mindset), the careers practitioner notices a clear drop in interest and enthusiasm among participants.

- What do you think may have happened?
- What do you think that the career practitioner could do to reach this target group?
- What would they have to consider about the potential challenges these participants have faced?
- What could help them promote this group's motivation in participating in this workshop?



Case study 2



Anna is studying mechanical engineering. It was her first choice and she is really enjoying to study this at university. She loves all the subjects and she is having really good grades. Now she is starting to worry about her internship and she sought you as a career practitioner to help her.

All her friends have chosen what area they want: some are going to automobile, shipbuilding, others aerospace, and others oil and gas companies... but she's not sure. Throughout her degree she has become more aware of the impact of all these industries on the planet and she doesn't know if it's possible to work in the area that she loves and not further contribute to polluting the world.

- How would you support Anna in her exploration of these various industries, both as areas of interest and as sources of pollution?
- How could you promote her reflection on the relationship between her interests and her ecological concerns?
- How could you support her anxiety regarding these issues?



Further reading

If you want to further explore critical approaches to career counselling, you can read:

- the article [Perspectives actuelles du conseil psychologique en orientation](#) by Poyaud & Cohen Scali, which reflects on how career counselling may be complicit in maintaining oppression and social injustices and how it can contribute to individual and collective wellbeing; and
- the article [The hegemonic psychological discourse and its implications for career counselling and psychological intervention](#), by Lucas Casanova that discusses practitioners' reflections on how socio-economic and political issues influence clients' experiences and their own practice.

Summary

In this chapter we have learnt that:

- social, economic and political issues have always been a part of career guidance;
- the IAEVG, the global body that organises career guidance, recommends that careers practitioners should consider environmental and social justice issues in the career guidance process;
- there are different ways to do and perceive green guidance ethically but there are some key guidelines that we can consider; and
- it can be argued that introducing environmental and social justice issues in career guidance is an ethical imperative.





Reflection

Having read this chapter, how do you feel about the integration of social, economic, environmental and political dimensions in career counselling? Try to think of a client that made you reflect on these issues for some reason. Maybe because of the professional experience she was living, maybe because of the discussion that emerged on the congruence between values, lifestyle, and professional interests, maybe because you experienced difficulties empathising with them.

Try to describe that client and the difficulties or doubts that emerged during the process.

Now, try to describe the client and their needs by characterising the five sites of wellbeing of that particular client as described by Prilleltensky and Stead within the individual, in their relations, organisations they are part of, their community and the environment – and reflecting on their level of satisfaction of objective and subjective needs. Explore that article for more information for your analysis.

Did they have access to enough material resources to ensure their access to opportunities? Did they feel a sense of self-efficacy that allowed them to feel confident in themselves? Their relational contexts were characterised by compassion or neglect? Did they feel supported by the organisations with which they interacted (e.g., school or work)? What were the values of their community and how would you describe it?

What could you do differently with a similar case in the future?

If you feel you need to discuss this case with someone, seek out your peers or a supervisor.

Indeed, it is important to question ourselves, how we experience the relationship with the client and their needs, and how we approach the client's needs. But this kind of questioning is difficult and so, seeking the support of fellow practitioners for critical reflection is crucial since.

5

HOW DO I DO GREEN GUIDANCE? WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

All guidance needs to be green and if these conversations happen early on we can make a difference to how people view their work choices and how it impacts the planet.

Careers practitioner responding to our survey.

We need direct examples from life, where it works and how it was achieved, as well as tangible results, i.e. measurable indicators, practical examples of positive impacts on nature, people and their thinking, changing approaches, etc.

Career practitioner responding to our survey.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, there are many good reasons for talking about climate change and a need for a green shift in career guidance. However, our survey of career practitioners' shows that while many practitioners are supportive of green guidance in theory, they are often unclear about what this means in practice. And as we discussed in the last chapter, many are particularly concerned about how to address this in ways which do not violate the ethical standards of the profession. So, how can we deal with the environmental crisis in our practice in a practical way, whilst also ensuring that we remain focused on our clients and avoid politicising what we do in ways that can be unethical? In the next two chapters we will explore these issues and provide you with a series of practical models and examples to help you to navigate them and put green guidance into practice.

We believe that it is possible to do green guidance in a way that is empowering to clients and which engages with their concerns about the world that they are living in. Both the environmental crisis and our societies response to it (the green transition) are facts which will impact on society, the labour market and the world of work. This means that engaging with green issues is no longer a choice but rather a core aspect of our work. But of course, we have lots of choices to make about how we do green guidance.

Ideally green guidance should be about helping people to build their knowledge about environmental issues and use this knowledge to shape their outlook on their future and the future of the world in which we all live. This chapter introduces a series of ways that you can 'green' your guidance. It recognises that career guidance practice can be very varied and looks at a range of different techniques and approaches that you can use. This chapter focuses on ways to work with individuals and groups, while the next chapter looks at more systemic ways of working.

Everything that is presented here is based on experiences and ideas that we have collected from practitioners just like you. Throughout this project, we have consulted and discussed how to do green guidance with career guidance practitioners and used this to craft a series of green guidance tools for you to explore. As we go through this practical chapter, we will introduce you to some of these tools. Remember that you will find even more tools and suggestions in the Green Guidance ToolBox.

Your starting point

There are a range of ways to work with clients through green guidance. You will have to develop your own style and own approach to practice. One good way to do this is to begin by reflecting on your values and your practice and to consider how this might shape how you approach green guidance.

Reflection: What is the purpose of career guidance?

What do you think the purpose of (green) career guidance is?

Is it:

- To help people to align their skills, aspirations and interests with what society needs?
- To help people to develop their skills, capabilities and aspirations and to become comfortable with the choices that they have made and satisfied with the way that their career has developed?
- To help people to play an active role in shaping the future of the society in which they live through their career choices, working life and citizenship?

Of course, the answer may be that you believe that your role as a career guidance practitioner is to combine two or even all three of these rationales, or that you believe that your role is to do something else altogether. That is fine, but it is useful to spend some time reflecting on what you believe the purpose of your work is, because the more that we think about green guidance, the more that we have to consider whether we need to change and adapt the way we see our work.

We are now going to move on to look at a series of different career guidance activities and think about how we might green each of them. The activities that we are going to look at are:

Informing.	Providing clients with information and new knowledge to help them to understand the world and their careers.
Assessing.	Helping clients to make judgements about their capabilities and how they can best use them in the world.
Advising and counselling.	Working with clients one-to-one or in small groups to help them reflect on themselves and the world.
Educating.	Helping clients to learn about themselves and the world either one-to-one or in groups or classes.
Brokering.	Connecting clients to other people who might be able to help them to develop their careers - e.g. setting up opportunities for people to access work experience.
Advocating.	Speaking on behalf of your client or clients when they do not feel able to speak for themselves.
Feeding back and shaping systems.	Using the information that you gather from engaging with your clients to highlight problems with organisational or political systems and make suggestions for improvement.

It is very likely that you are only involved in some of these activities, so it is probably best if you start by focusing on the ones that you do and then branching out from there. We will mainly look at informing, assessing, advising and counselling and educating in this chapter, but will then move on to look at brokering, advocating and feeding back and shaping systems in the next chapter.

Developing your approach to green guidance is a continuous journey. It begins with self-awareness - understanding your own worldview and ethical perspectives - and extends to being attuned to your clients' and students' situation. The aim is to weave sustainability into discussions about their careers, doing so in a way that avoids inducing resistance, guilt, or putting too much focus on individual actions while neglecting the systemic causes of the current crisis. This approach encourages clients and students to broaden their contemplation of career choices, planting seeds that contribute incrementally to societal transformation - much like laying one brick at a time to construct a cathedral.

Careers are how individuals make their way through their lives, learning and work. Everyone has a career, even people who may never have a job. In this sense a career is a democratic concept which is open to everyone. So, everyone has a career, and everyone makes use of the resources that are around them. It is already happening and will be even more noticeable as we move along with the green transition, but the environmental crisis means that we will have different resources to draw on in the future. In our careers we interact with others and with institutions as we try and shape our lives. This could include drawing on friends and social networks, employers, families and communities.

Green guidance is a form of purposeful career support which actively gives people new opportunities to learn new information and skills, make contacts and have experiences which can support them to develop their careers. So, now, let's focus in on some of the ways that we can do this.



Further reading

Laura Nota and colleagues have published a very useful book called [Sustainable development, career counselling and career education](#). Another useful book is by Valerie Cohen-Scali and colleagues and is entitled [Interventions in career design and education: Transformation for sustainable development and decent work](#).



Reflection: Reviewing your practice

Before we get started on looking at new approaches it is worth reflecting on what you do already. Use the table below to help you reflect on your existing practice.

	Do you currently do this?	What do you do?	Does this include any examples that you could see as 'green guidance'?	Can you imagine any ways to green this?
Informing				
Assessing				
Advising and counselling				
Educating				
Brokering				
Advocating				
Feeding back and shaping systems				

At the moment you will probably have a lot of blank boxes in your table, but as you engage with this Handbook you are likely be able to fill more in as you notice the green aspects of what you are already doing, and generate more ideas for greening your practice.

Informing

An important function of career guidance is to provide people with information that they need to develop their careers. Typically, this information is described as ‘career and labour market information’ and includes the provision of the following things.

- Occupational information. What different jobs exist and what do they do.
- Information about qualifications and pathways into different jobs and careers.
- Salary data. How much different occupations earn.
- Geographical information. Where different courses and occupations are located.
- Trend data. What economists and other experts think is likely to happen in the short, medium and long-term.

It is also possible to include a range of other kinds of information that might be helpful to people in making career choices. These might be things like helping people to understand the benefit and welfare system, increasing their knowledge of transport links which can help them access opportunities, or providing information on who is and isn’t a good employer based on criteria like job security, access to training, and employee satisfaction and engagement. Many clients are also interested in the ethical standards of the employers that they are considering working for and want to know whether this employer is exploiting people in the Global South or making dangerous products.

This kind of expanded definition of career and labour market information opens some big opportunities for green guidance. It would clearly be useful to people as they make career choices, if they could find out more about:

- what different employers’ environmental policies are;
- whether employers are making a positive or negative difference to the environment;
- how these companies plan to respond to the environmental crisis and to green transition policies; and
- whether environmental changes are likely to see particular companies, sectors or occupations increasing or decreasing in size.

This kind of approach firstly serves to awaken people to the range of opportunities and challenges that exist when you are building a career on a planet which is entering a period of environmental crisis. Secondly it provides them with the information that they need to begin to navigate their career with a focus on sustainability and environmental wellbeing.

Talking to clients and students about the *greening* of the economy is often highly reliant on the provision of good quality information. People need to be able to see how the green transition is already impacting on jobs and gain insights into what impact it might have in the future. The provision of this kind of information supports them to consider what the impact of the green transition is going to be on them. Without violating our ethical principles or inducing eco-anxiety, careers practitioners can work with clients to reflect on how their current or prospective profession impacts on our *shared home*—the environment and on how environmental and policy changes are going to impact this profession.

The goal is not to push all clients and students toward green careers or education in fields directly linked to the green transition. However, if the client is open to it, these possibilities can be proactively suggested and explored. Again, this requires access to good quality information that can be provided to clients to stimulate

discussions. Careers practitioners can pose questions like: ‘*Could your current or future job be affected by the green transition?*’ or ‘*How might your current or future work impact our shared environment?*’

Clients or students can also be supported in discovering ways to make their current job *greener*. Providing them with access to information and asking them to investigate it offers a good way to stimulate thinking in this area. For instance, you could ask ‘*What is the smallest concrete action you could take to make your work more sustainable?*’ and provide them with some examples of sustainable working practices to spark their imaginations. Inviting them to express their concerns about the green transition can also help in understanding what this issue means to them, prompting further questions, identifying their motivations, and deepening the discussion. Again, having access to good quality factual information can help to move people’s thinking forward on these issues.



Critical corner

It is important to think about how we can subject the claims about environmentalism made by the media and organisations to some critical scrutiny. Many companies claim to be sustainable. Many jobs advertise themselves as ‘green’. But in some cases this is just ‘greenwashing’, i.e. saying the right thing but not actually doing it.

It is important for green guidance to raise the issue of greenwashing and encourage students and clients to dig below the surface when they are faced with these kinds of claims. Encourage them to look for evidence and consider the motivation behind different kinds of claims to be green.



Reflection

Do you have access to up-to-date information about the green transition?

Where can you find this information?

How can you make this a part of your continuing professional development (CPD) routine?

If you have knowledge about how the green transition will affect work and society in the future, and you are used to thinking creatively about it and imagining scenarios and opportunities, it will be easier to see what is relevant for your clients and to sketch out possible greener scenarios with them.



Which tool?

In promoting the idea of green guidance, we have found it very useful to offer all our clients an [electronic bulletin board \(Padlet\)](#) where we collect usable information, including those related to inspiration for green jobs and integrating environmental topics into careers. This way, the CDP does not have to explain this information to each client, just offer self-study materials. Several useful resources are available in this Padlet, such as a collection of green data visualisations (to illustrate changes that are happening by showing them to clients, putting them on the wall in your office or adding them to your organisational or professional social media feeds), videos on green topics to spark a conversation and generate curiosity, collection of photos of green careers to help your students or clients see vocations and occupations in a different light. We also suggest that you connect with other career guidance practitioners to investigate the green shift and work together to find information that is relevant for the group of people you see most, the area you work in, or your country.

The posters placed in the consulting room (e.g., links to key organisations and associations or information on what sustainable measures we have set up in our office) can also contribute to awareness.



Further reading

There are lots of resources out there that you can use to find out about green careers. It is important to do some research in your country and find materials that are relevant to your clients.

Some useful starting points are: [What to do to green your career](#) or [Find your future in an environmental career](#).

There are also some good resources on YouTube including the [Climate career pathfinding](#) workshop and the [environmental careers outlook](#) resource.

Assessing clients' needs

Conventional approaches to career assessment focus on carefully identifying the needs, wants and capabilities of the individual. In a green guidance approach, this is likely to include exploring people's level of interest in environmental sustainability, their knowledge about green careers and broader sustainability issues, and their desire to pursue a green career or incorporate environmental considerations into their career development.

At its most basic this may be just asking people questions like.

- What role does the environment play in your life or interests?
- How do you feel when you spend time in nature? What kinds of outdoor spaces do you enjoy most?
- How would the environment or sustainability issues connect with your current interests? And what about other dimensions of your life project (e.g., life style, education and career goals...)?
- In what ways do you think climate change or the transition to a Net Zero economy might affect your career path or choices? What would you like to learn or explore about opportunities around green and sustainable industries?
- What skills do you have which might contribute to sustainability?

These kinds of questions serve to surface people's ideas, interests and concerns and allow careers practitioners to begin to determine whether it would be useful to take a green guidance approach with someone. Of course, it is possible to build on these kinds of qualitative assessments to develop or use new quantitative assessments which seek to measure people's interests and attitudes in this area further.

It is also worth considering whether, in green guidance, we should move beyond the assessment of the individual towards broader kinds of assessments. This might include the development of tools that we and our clients can use to assess the environmental needs of an area or community. We may also work with clients to help them assess the sustainability of various options they are considering. For example, does a training course they are exploring help them to make a bigger contribution to sustainability, or are employers' claims about their sustainability substantial or merely greenwashing?



Which tool?

Use these [conversation starters](#) to bring up the topic of environmental sustainability in relation to career.

You can also use activities such as [Eco-skills](#) and [Eco-values](#) to naturally integrate sustainability into the self-assessment of clients' and students' skills and values.



Further reading

You may find Trevor Lehman's [Guide to career and climate](#) a useful starting point for green career assessment.

Advising and counselling

For many careers practitioners, the one-to-one counselling session is a central form of practice. The two activities that we have discussed so far (informing and assessing) can often be incorporated into counselling sessions. Counselling can happen in a range of ways and settings, from appointments to drop-in, they can be in schools, universities, public employment offices, employment or private practice.

Regardless of where and how you are working, as a careers practitioner you need to work with whoever is in front of you and start from where they are starting. So, counselling tends to be client led and focused on the individual. Because of this it can be one of the most challenging approaches if we want to proactively raise issues about the green transition. As practitioners we always need to keep the client's needs, concerns and ideas in focus.

Practitioners working with us in the Green Guidance Project were often cautious about the idea of imposing their ideas and values on their clients. When we discussed this further with practitioners, they would reflect that it may not be ethical to ignore the reality of the green transition (see chapter 4). The green transition is likely to be one of the most important factors that people need to deal with as they develop their career. Helping clients to consider how to navigate the green shift in their career can be as much about opportunities and the smart moves they want to make as it is about discussing values and bigger political questions.

Being able to discuss green issues in counselling probably requires careers practitioners to operate in two registers. Firstly, they should be able to provide green career and labour market information to stimulate the conversations and encourage people to reflect on new opportunities. Secondly, they should be able to operate at a deeper level and discuss client's values and world views as part of developing their career.

This means that having access to a good source of up-to-date (green) labour market information is critical. Finding these sources and learning from them should be at the heart of your professional development routine. You need to be informed to be able to bring the green transition up in counselling at the right time and place, and the conversation starters can also be of good use here.

But you should also spend some time thinking about the bigger issues. You need to be comfortable and informed when discussing these deeper questions with clients. Clients may be concerned as to whether they have a future at all, want to discuss the ethics of working in 'brown' companies that pollute the planet or even just want your opinion on whether all of this 'climate change stuff' is something that they should take seriously. You don't have to become a philosopher or a climate scientist, but you should be prepared to get into these kinds of deeper questions.

Counselling is about a lot more than solving a practical problem. It is a time when you have the opportunity to discuss issues deeply and reflectively with clients. Questions about hopes and fears about the future may open discussion of the environmental crisis and even raise issues of climate anxiety. Similarly, it is very legitimate to talk to people in counselling about their values and how they want their work and career to connect with these. In our discussions with career practitioners, we realised that sustainability aligns with other values as well. For instance, individuals who prioritise security or tradition might be more concerned about the risks posed by water scarcity or the loss of cherished landscapes rather than a sense of solidarity with climate change victims. More traditional-minded people often resist the transition because they fear it will disrupt their way of life. Yet, in reality, the challenge is to preserve the things that are important to us and to which we are emotionally attached. Trying to change people's values does not work, we should seek to understand them and engage with individuals based on what matters to them.

The conversation should be guided by the client's worldview and personal priorities, identifying subtle connections to sustainability rather than through giving lengthy lectures about environmental topics. On the other hand, sustainability can be connected to the client's ideas about meaningful work and their value system, even if they do not bring it up spontaneously, perhaps because they do not expect sustainability to be a topic in career counselling. This approach can be seen as seeking to make explicit the unspoken, latent criteria and factors in career decision-making.

Another area that can open interesting discussions is to talk about people's ideas about what success looks like and help your client to reflect on this. There are big questions about whether working lots of hours to get to the top of an organisation is sustainable in either a personal or an environmental sense. Encouraging clients to reflect about these kinds of issues can open interesting reflections for individuals as they think about their career.

Some key techniques that you are likely to use when delivering green guidance through a counselling modality include:

- **Contracting - state your own approach:** For transparency, you can inform beneficiaries from the outset about the specificities of your approach during the contracting phase or when presenting your role and services. This could take the following form, though you may find a better phrasing suited to your audience: *“My approach to career guidance includes sustainability considerations, both environmental and societal. If this resonates with your concerns, we can explore this topic together during our sessions.”* If the client or student explains at the beginning of the session that he or she is looking for a career change, you can say: *“I have a particular interest in sustainability issues, green jobs, and opportunities linked to the ecological transition. If this is something that interests you, we can explore it together.”* Some practitioners even use implicit messaging such as sustainability or nature-related office decoration, a relevant quote or poster on the wall.
- **Raising issues.** In addition to openly sharing your own specific approach, this also creates an opportunity to introduce these topics early in the counselling process. Many clients and students are concerned about sustainability and ecological crisis but might think that the career development session is not a place to discuss these issues - you stating openly your own sensibilities, values and expertise can make this a legitimate topic for further discussion.
- **Conversation starters:** Another possible first step to raise the topic of sustainability is to simply ask a well-targeted question at the beginning of the process, for example:
 - Questions about future changes in the world of work and opportunities: *“In your opinion, what are the main factors that will influence the future of work?”* *“What is the impact that climate change and sustainability could have on your (current or future) sector of activity?”*
 - Many clients and students might have had negative experiences with the labour market (discrimination, exploitation, lack of recognition, exhaustion, burn-out...). You can open

- a discussion that helps clients critically reflect on the dominant discourse around career success, conformity, growth, competition and connect these issues to the wider concept of sustainability (decent work, meaningful career etc.): “What positive changes would you like to see in this sector in 10 years? How could you contribute to them?” “What aspects of your profession or sector do you think should evolve to be more environmentally friendly?”
- ▶ Connecting with global challenges: “What problems in the world, society, or your community concern you? Which ones would you like to contribute to solving?”
 - ▶ Questions about one’s own role: “Imagine your profession in a world where sustainability/justice/fairness/well-being is the norm. How do you think your role would change?” “What trace do you want to leave on this planet?” “How do you imagine you can contribute to the green transition?”
- **Imagining career options:** Reflective questions can be used to invoke the question of sustainability in the process of generating different career options. This process often relies in creative thinking and brainstorming and you can direct this process to involve questions around sustainability with questions such as:
 - ▶ In your dream career, what changes would you like to see around you regarding environmental protection or collective well-being?
 - ▶ If you could design your ideal professional future, what role would sustainability play in it?
 - **Supporting career decision-making.** Career choices are traditionally based on factors such as salary, skills, or personal interests, rarely extending beyond the individual’s perspective. Why not add sustainability to these decision-making criteria?
 - ▶ Traditional tools like decision grids, values lists, and competency charts can be expanded to include sustainability. The beneficiary remains free to choose whether or not to prioritise sustainability in their decision-making. You can find some examples [in our toolbox](#), such as list of eco-values and list of eco-competences.
 - ▶ Rather than seeking to influence choices, this approach helps individuals consider all relevant factors affecting the job market, the economy but also their community and the planet. It broadens perspectives without biasing decisions or limiting freedom of choice. Sustainability thus becomes one element among others for making informed and conscious career decisions.



Which tool?

[Conversation starters](#) provide some examples of questions that may introduce environmental sustainability into conversation.

You can use the [Eco-skills](#) scenario to help clients and students identify skills linked to sustainability that they already have.

Or, taking the opposite starting point, if the client feels overwhelmed with trying to see how their career connects to the environmental crisis try an adapted [Ikigai](#) method that starts with the needs of the world. It is a guide with examples of questions, helping the clients to de-centre from themselves.

You can also use decision-making and goal-setting as avenues for introducing environmental sustainability (see the [Cost-benefits analysis](#) and [SMOOTH goals](#)).

To foster a deeper reflection on meaning, you can experiment the activity [Letter from the future](#).



Reflection

What are the values that are important to your target group, to the people you work with? Beyond individual differences, are there any general tendencies? How can these values be connected to the question of sustainability? What specific strategies could you use?



Critical corner

It is important not to overemphasise the role of individual choices in climate change – not only since it may generate a sense of guilt or eco-anxiety, but most of all not to misdirect our attention from the real culprits of the environmental crisis.

It was in fact British Petroleum, the second largest non-state owned oil company in the world, that hired the public relations professionals to promote the slant that climate change is not the fault of an oil giant, but that of individuals. BP successfully popularized the term ‘carbon footprint’ and introduced its ‘carbon footprint calculator’ in 2004 so one could assess how their normal daily life is largely responsible for heating the globe.

This is not to say that individuals can’t make a difference to the world. There is a psychologically challenging reality to negotiate here where we help people to see that, while the environmental crisis isn’t their fault, they can contribute in their own measure through the way that they live their life.



Further reading

There are a growing range of useful tools and information available to support green career counselling. See the tool from the [environmental career coach](#) and [the green career advisor](#).

There are also some useful YouTube videos including [green career guidance tips](#) and [working with green guidance in PES public employment sector](#).

If you want to get deeper into this you might want to read the academic article [Green guidance: which interventions for which problems?](#) or download the [Women 4 green Guide for career counselling and recruiting](#).



Educating

All career interventions are about helping people to reflect and learn about themselves and the world. Given this, a process of education is at the heart of most career development activities.

Many careers practitioners are involved in the delivery of workshops, training sessions and even whole educational programs which help people learn about careers and acquire career competence. These educational opportunities allow you to engage with issues related to climate change and the green transition.

In chapter two we introduced Dimsits and Hooley's five dimensions of environmentally sustainable guidance. It is possible to restate these so that they become potential learning outcomes for career education. So green career education programmes can help people to do the following.



These learning outcomes offer us a framework for discussing the green transition and its relationship with our lives on an educational level. For example, you could develop lessons that introduce groups to green careers (learning outcome 3 - LO3), hopefully awakening their imagination about the careers that are possible (LO4). But this kind of approach is just the start. You can also support people to research the relationship between their career decisions (whatever they are) and the environmental impacts that might emerge from them (LO3). This kind of learning can often confront people emotionally (LO1) as they think about the impacts that they are having on others and the world (LO2). Such education programmes may also ask people to think about what alternatives they have (LO4) and also how they can come together with others (LO2) and seek to change how businesses, organisations and societies operate in order to make them more sustainable (LO5).

How you organise this kind of learning will depend very much on the time that you have available and the context in which you are working, but educational approaches are a very flexible way to deliver green guidance as they enable the careers practitioner to set out a programme of learning which is designed to deepen students' engagement with an issue.



Which tool?

When we design career education programs, it is important to make sure that the learners have time and space to go more deeply into the learning processes. It is great if you can set up projects where they are encouraged to investigate and explore problems and suggest solutions themselves because this promotes deeper learning. There are many ways to go about this, and we will give you just a few examples from our toolbox to help you start thinking about designing and structuring career learning with a focus on the green shift.

- [Paths for greening your career](#) is an activity which asks participants to identify professions and evaluate existing jobs in terms of their sustainability. Through group brainstorming, participants define what constitutes a green profession, categorise jobs into green, neutral, or non-green categories, and assess how these professions have evolved in relation to sustainability. The exercise also encourages them to explore how non-green professions can be made more sustainable by suggesting changes that align with environmental goals.
- [Our Green Company](#) is an activity in which students create a mock eco-friendly company and develop its mission, vision, environmental goals, and services. Working in teams, students define roles based on their individual skills and competencies, considering how each role contributes to sustainability. This exercise helps students imagine and explore sustainable career paths and the skills needed to support a greener future.
- [Who takes care of the environment? Eco-jobs around us](#) introduces children from an early age to the idea that jobs can be environmentally friendly and helps them imagine their green job of the future.
- [Green Oxford debate](#) is an activity that promotes critical thinking around the green transition and invites students to adopt a certain viewpoint and critically examine the supporting arguments.

Summary

In this chapter we have learnt that there are a wide range of different ways that we can work with clients and students in green guidance. When we are working with individuals and groups we can:

- provide green career information that educates people about the possibilities that are available in the green economy, and prompts them to think more deeply about the career choices and the society in which they are living;
- help people to assess their own strengths, weakness and values in relation to their careers and make an assessment of the societal and community needs and the relative environmental merits of different choices;
- engage in counselling where we listen carefully to clients concerns about environmental issues and proactively raise these issues as something to discuss and think about; and
- engage in educational activities to help people to understand the environmental crisis, the green transition, and the impacts on their career and on their lives.

6

HOW DO I DO GREEN GUIDANCE? SYSTEMIC APPROACHES

To be an activist is to speak. To be an advocate is to listen. Society can't move forward without both.

Eva Marie Lewis

When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.

Malala Yousafzai

This chapter builds on the previous chapter to look further at what options careers practitioners have in green guidance. Whereas the previous chapter looked primarily at the process of working with individuals and groups, this chapter explores the work that a careers practitioner can do at a systemic level.

Working at a systemic level is less familiar to many careers practitioners, but we all do it all the time. We believe that in green guidance it is the next logical step as there is only so much that we can achieve by working with individuals and their immediate surroundings. If we want to avoid our clients repeatedly facing the same barriers and limitations – particularly those affected by various differences and ways in which society has discriminated and made them vulnerable (race, ethnicity, gender, family background, socio-economic status, ...) – we must help shift the boundaries of the game.

Imagine a world where you work twelve hours a day, six or seven days a week. Your small children work as well, because child labour is the norm. Only privileged children (mostly boys) go to school. Your work may be dangerous, injuries happen daily, and safety is not addressed. You don't have the right to vote, and no one defends you in court unless you belong to the 'right' social class. Does it sound dystopian? And yet, this was a reality in a not-so-distant past. Universal suffrage, compulsory and free schooling, the eight-hour workday or equality before the law – things we consider an integral and natural part of our lives, exist thanks to people who combined their voices, knowledge and influence to make a systemic change – i.e., thanks to advocacy and activism.

Don't worry – this text is not calling you to the barricades. There is a significant difference between advocacy and other forms of systemic work and activism. It is part of the job of a careers practitioner to engage with the systems that they and their clients work with. On the other hand, activism is a part of your role as a citizen. It can often be difficult to disentangle what is part of your professional role, from what is part of your role as a citizen, so the table below might help.

	Activism (Citizens role)	Advocacy and system change (professional role)
Aim	Broad societal change, often through public pressure.	Specific changes to policies, legislation, or practice in favour of a target group.
Role of the individual	Citizen is limited only by the legal boundaries, otherwise she/he can do whatever she/he feels comfortable with.	Professional uses her/his expertise and adheres to ethical standards.
Methods	Demonstrations, petitions, campaigns, boycotts, etc.	Analyses, legislative feedback, expert consultations, negotiations, policy briefs, professional practice.
Risks	Legal actions, digital attacks, burnout.	Conflict of interest if the professional and personal dimensions of advocacy/activism are not clearly separated. Burnout.

Our key message here is that as a careers practitioner you are professionally obliged to bring client voices into institutional and policy spaces and to work to improve the systems in any ways that are available to you.

We are going to look at three forms of systemic working that careers practitioners should be familiar with: brokerage, advocacy and feeding back and developing system. But first let's think a bit more about your role and how you can get started.

Getting started with systemic work

Systemic work can take many forms. It doesn't always mean standing in front of a crowd with a megaphone or discussing policies with decision-makers on a televised debate. Sometimes, it's about small, consistent actions—asking the right questions or introducing sustainability topics in career conversations. That's why it's so important that each of us find our own way. Our own way of doing advocacy that fits us.

So, how do you find an advocacy approach that fits you? Let's start with a few questions for you to reflect on:

- What are my values? How do I apply my values to my work?
- How else could I apply my values to my work? Are there other ways I haven't tried?
- What kind of impact do I want to see in the world? Can I measure that impact? How will I recognise the change?

Next, think about your strengths in this kind of work. Ask yourself:

- What skills do I excel at? (e.g., communication, organising, researching, mentoring)
- What experiences have prepared me for systemic work?
- How do I best connect with others and inspire action?

Your approach to systemic work should align with who you are. If public speaking makes you nervous, maybe your strength lies in writing articles, or mentoring students. If you love networking, perhaps your role is in brokerage and bringing the right people together. There's no one-size-fits-all approach.

The key is to start where you are and grow from there. The world needs many different voices in green career guidance—including yours.



Which tool?

Try to use some of the tools from our toolbox that can help you formulate your contribution to the world ([IKIGAI](#), [Challenges of the world and meaningful career](#)), and imagine the future you wish to contribute to ([The reality of our utopia](#) or [Letter from the future](#)).

As a career practitioner, you already hold the tools to make a difference. You can begin with small, meaningful actions in your everyday work: opening up conversations, raising questions, and sharing knowledge with clients, colleagues and other relevant actors in the community. These steps might seem minor, but they can spark broader change over time. From there, you can gradually build confidence and move towards more visible or strategic advocacy activities—at a pace that fits you.

- Discuss the topic of sustainability with your colleagues. In formal and informal meetings, you can always look for opportunities to promote the topic of sustainability and green guidance. You will most likely find other colleagues interested in the topic and your group will grow. In addition to face-to-face meetings, there are great opportunities in the online space. There are a number of discussion groups and

other online professional communities where you can promote the topic of green guidance. Because of the immediate feedback that the online space usually offers, this is a great opportunity in testing effective ways of communicating.

- Organise your own educational and awareness-raising activities. Use your strengths. Are they communication skills? Specific knowledge? You probably have an idea of what others would like to learn from you. Link this to promoting ideas that are important to you. Your target audience can be clients as well as politicians, employers or stakeholders. The events you organise can be face-to-face or online. Another option is to write blogs, record videos or podcasts.
- Advocate for your clients' interests. Remember that you are not promoting sustainability and green guidance for yourself. Part of a careers practitioner's job is to move from working with individuals on an individual basis to a broader framework and to contribute to improving the overall conditions for education, employment and career development on a larger scale. Your role (as a 'green' careers practitioner) is to communicate how sustainability issues relate to career development.
- Engage in research and data collection. Careers practitioner can actively contribute to sustainable development by getting involved in monitoring labour market trends in green jobs. You can work with academic institutions, non-profit organisations or government agencies to collect data on sustainable career options. Advocacy and lobbying also include promoting research findings.
- Work with schools and universities. Connect with academic institutions to help integrate sustainability topics into the curriculum or the work of university career centres. You can organise workshops for students, collaborate on green careers courses and help young people find pathways to sustainable employment.



Further reading

Many of the issues raised above are discussed in an accessible way in [A practitioner's guide to uncharted waters of career counselling. A critical reflection perspective.](#)

Brokering

Career guidance can be about brokering connections and opportunities for the people that we work with, and it can be about finding ways to help people to talk to someone who might be able to help them, to try something out or even to find a job or learning opportunity that they might want to talk about. This can be especially important for younger students in schools, and the work you do as a career practitioner to bridge the realms of school and world of work is central. By connecting your students and clients to people with lived experience of the green economy you can show them greener ways to live and encourage them to think about the green transition. Brokerage can provide opportunities for reflection and learning and propelling people onto the next stage of their career, by building their experience and social capital.

Brokering as a green guidance practitioner, can be about helping individuals to connect to organisations and people that are engaged in the green transition. This can take the form of arranging talks, setting up mentoring opportunities or arranging opportunities for visits and work experience. There is strong evidence that tells us that these kinds of relationships and learning opportunities can really drive people's careers forward.

Brokerage can also be about putting people together with others who have the same motivation and drive

to green their careers together. When people work together, they can provide help, support and encouragement and work together to move their careers forward.

Building a strong network and a broad awareness of opportunities in the labour market and civic society are likely to be key to your role in brokering effective career learning opportunities. This means reaching out to new and existing contacts to help your students and clients to find green career learning opportunities. You can start by looking for contacts in the green economy, for people who have job titles that are associated with the environment, sustainability and for organisations and individuals that are involved with forms of environmental activism. But you should also structure existing brokerage activities such as employer engagement activities in schools to address environmental issues, for example by asking visiting employers to discuss their organisations' approach to sustainability.



Reflection

What contacts do you have that can help your students and clients to engage with issues of sustainability and the green transition?

What opportunities do you have to develop your contacts? What conferences and meetings should you be going to?

What is the best way to bring your students and clients together with representatives from the labour market and the education and training system in ways that support reflection on green issues?



Which tool?

People often are unaware of their resources when it comes to networks and who should get into contact with who, so the key point is to make people aware of the resources they have and establish ways to communicate this to others who may benefit from them.

- [I know someone who...](#) is a group activity that focuses on mapping networks and sharing information.
- [The reality of our utopia](#) is another tool that can help clients to connect with others who share their idealism. This can help them to come together and support each other towards a greener path.

Advocating

As a careers practitioner you will often find that you are called on to speak on behalf of your students and clients. Many people lack the skills and confidence to speak for themselves, particularly when they are interfacing with big institutions like employers and educational providers. While the first responsibility of the careers practitioner is to help them to build their confidence and skills to represent themselves, sometimes it may be helpful to go to a meeting with them, or even to write or speak on their behalf.

For example, you may be working with a student who is very enthusiastic about becoming an environmental scientist. But, because her grades are consistently at the top of the class, both the school and her parents have always pushed her towards medicine. If you call a meeting to discuss these issues with all of the stakeholders, it is unreasonable to expect the student to make all of the arguments herself. The power dynamics in

that room are quite unbalanced. Hence you might think that it is a good idea for you to attend and say things like ‘*when I was talking to Anna, I was really impressed with her knowledge about environmental science*’, or ‘*there are a lot of really good opportunities in this field, would you like me to show you some examples*’. This kind of support could really empower your client to move forward in their career, and help her parents and the school to think about their expectations.

There are some important dangers to consider when you are engaging in individual advocacy work. If you always speak for your clients and never challenge them to speak for themselves and support them to develop their ability to self-advocate, you run the risk of disempowering them. Careers practitioners need to balance their roles carefully, supporting their clients to develop and increase their confidence to advocate for themselves, but also being willing to step in when it is necessary and be their advocate.

As well as advocating and supporting individual students or clients in particular crisis situations, there are also wider forms of partnership building that can also be understood as advocacy work. So, if you notice that a lot of your clients are raising a particular issue, such as their desire for more ethical and sustainable work, it is possible to speak to employers and other stakeholders to raise this issue. In such cases you are advocating for your clients collectively rather than individually.



Which tool?

The [10 steps to advocacy](#) tool sets out an end-to-end process for advocacy in guidance. This is particularly useful if you aren't sure how you should approach advocacy activities.

Feeding back and developing systems

As a careers practitioner you will hear a lot about the problems that the people that you work with have. This might relate to their experience of schools, employers, benefit system or any other aspect of their life. You will undoubtedly start to notice patterns in the kinds of problems that they are experiencing which will generate ideas about what you can do about this. In many cases it may simply be a question of letting other people know about the problems. Perhaps students are unhappy with the school timetable, but no one has ever told the teacher or administrator who is responsible for the timetable to make the change. Or, in the case of green guidance, perhaps the students are calling for more information on greening jobs and industries but the teachers on their different subjects or the employers you visit do not know about this and hence cannot prepare information on it. Feeding back this information could make all the difference.

On the other hand, sometimes you will identify problems that are not so easily solved. When it comes to the green transition, a big problem that we expect to see more and more is that the already growing difference between the rich and the poor will be exacerbated and that the problems with the environmental crisis will disproportionately affect those who have less access to resources – money, knowledge and skills. Changing this is likely to be a longer and more complex process, but it is still worth feeding back to organisations and people that you work with how continuously and perhaps unconsciously some groups of people are given less opportunities, and then making the case for change. Sometimes this might turn into being part of a campaign for change.

Careers practitioners need to be willing to work at all levels, especially as the green transition will encompass all fields of life and work. If our aim is to help someone in their career, the way we achieve this needs to fit the issue that they are experiencing. Sometimes this can best be done through the provision of some information, sometimes through a counselling meeting and so on. But sometimes it will be most important to engage with issues at the levels of organisations, systems, structures and policies. Such work is still an im-

portant part of career development practice, even if it may look different from traditional information and counselling approaches.

When we are working on feeding back and developing systems, we should always ask ourselves three key questions.

- Whom does it concern (Who is it about)? Often careers practitioners work with disadvantaged groups. For example, we are interested in whether everyone has truly equal access to education, job opportunities or fair pay. If they do not have equal access and we come across this in our practice, we pass this information on (that it is happening, why it is happening and what can be done about it).
- What tools are used? From the simplest to the most complex: email, letter or phone call with decision makers and politicians; expert statements or analyses, participation in roundtables or panels, creating and publicising recommendations, legislative feedback, building strategic partnerships, and face-to-face meetings with politicians.
- Why is it important? Without advocacy, the problems we identify in our counselling practice (whether systemic or specific to certain target groups) would hit a dead end. Nothing would change for the better.

Examples of successful system development

Miroslava Smatanová, one of our Green Guidance Slovak Ambassadors, works at the public employment services (UPSVaR). Inspired by her participation in this project, she developed a methodological tool for assessing green competences with jobseekers. The approach is firmly aligned with the GreenComp framework to support clients in embodying sustainability values (recognising the importance of everyday ecological actions), embracing complexity (understanding how their skills connect to broader environmental and social systems), envisioning sustainable futures (imagining career paths in green sectors), and acting for sustainability (planning concrete training or work steps). It also reflects the five dimensions of Green Guidance by reconnecting clients with their ecological practices, helping them discover green opportunities, decide in relation to societal needs, reimagine alternative futures, and see their potential role in change. The tool was pilot tested in one regional labour office, where it proved effective in engaging jobseekers, including disadvantaged clients. The Slovak employment services plan to deploy it nationally, embedding sustainability into standard jobseekers' support across the country.

One of the partners of this project, Katalyst Education, has a longstanding career guidance project - [Mapa Karier](#). Within this project they have developed a partnership with the West Pomeranian region in Poland, focused on the broad promotion of the offshore sector, particularly offshore wind energy. As part of this initiative, they will develop educational materials for young people, create descriptions of new sustainable professions in this area, and conduct interviews with people already working in the industry.

As a result of students' campaigns and actions for social and climate justice through the student network People & Planet, Birkbeck, University of London has become the first university in the UK to end fossil fuel industry recruitment on campus, stating in its Ethical Careers Policy that it "will not hold relationships of any kind with oil, gas or mining companies as part of our commitment to increased sustainability and addressing the climate crisis.". More information on this [here](#).

Which tool?

We have put together a [Feedback tool](#) which is designed to provide you with ideas about how to gather the opinions of your students and clients on environmental and climate issues. This data can be used both to develop your service and influence the organisations and systems that you work with.



Reflection

How comfortable do you feel about working at this systemic level? Not all careers practitioners view themselves as activists, leaders or change makers. This is one role that you can play, but not the only one.

But it is also worth remembering that you don't need so to be a radical to be concerned about climate change. It is worth spending some time thinking about the kind of role that you can play.

Summary

This chapter has introduced you to a range of systemic ways of working. The key things to remember are as follows.

- Working at a systemic level is a professional responsibility for careers practitioners. If our clients and students are going to have the best chance to build a successful career, they will need help to remove systemic barriers.
- There is a clear distinction between this kind of professional work on systems and the kind of activism that you might engage in as a citizen. Careers practitioners act as professionals using their expertise ethically to represent client voices in decision-making spaces.
- Systemic work can take many forms from small everyday actions like raising sustainability issues in client sessions to engaging with policy-makers and shaping legislation. In particular we have introduced three key approaches of brokerage, advocacy and feeding back and developing systems.
- Practitioners should find their own ways of working systemically based on their values, skills and capacity—there is no one-size-fits-all model.
- Systemic change complements work with individuals and groups. Addressing only individual-level issues without influencing the wider system slows down meaningful progress.
- Even small contributions matter—a single letter, consultation response or awareness-raising activity can ripple out and lead to broader impact.



7

FINAL THOUGHTS

This handbook has argued that the environmental crisis is not only a defining issue of our time, but one that directly shapes the present and future of work, learning, and life. As such, career guidance can and must respond to this challenge by helping people navigate a world in transition, and explore how they can shape it.

Green guidance supports individuals, groups, and communities in thinking about their careers through the lenses of ecological sustainability and social justice. It also fosters imagination, agency, and hope for a wider and just social transformation. Throughout this handbook, we've introduced different approaches to green guidance, using Packer's Model of light green approaches (that do not challenge the status quo) to dark green ones (that contribute to change, social reconstruction, justice and collective action), through an individual focus or a social one. By presenting these different approaches and offering examples of how to *do* green guidance, we aimed to provide opportunities for careers practitioners to engage with different possibilities so that you can adopt the one that makes sense for you, for your clients and students, and for your context.

We've explored ethical considerations, and strategies for engaging clients with diverse views towards the environmental crisis. By reflecting on the objections to green guidance we have encountered, we have proposed a set of guidelines for an ethical green guidance, that acknowledges its own limitations. Green guidance invites careers practitioners to develop an ethical career counselling: that assumes its responsibilities and doesn't ignore the implications of career counselling practice for social justice and ecological sustainability.

By identifying ways of doing green guidance with individuals and groups, we've provided practical tools and examples, and suggested ways to take green guidance into schools, employment services, universities, and beyond. We have also invited careers practitioners to reflect on the potential of systemic approaches, identifying how we can contribute to change in our own contexts.

We encourage you to explore [our website](#) and in particular **all the tools** that were developed with the support of European careers practitioners, read case studies, share your own ideas, and connect with other practitioners. The tools are open-source and adaptable - you can use them as they are, or change them to suit your context.

We also want to acknowledge something important: *green guidance is an emerging practice*. It's not a finished model. There is no one *right* way to do it. The practice is still developing, as the social, economic, and environmental context in which we practice is evolving rapidly too. This means there's room for experimentation, for learning through doing, and for honest reflection. Some strategies will work; others may not. That's part of the process. Stay open, stay curious, and stay connected to your values and to your clients.

Finally, we want to leave you with this thought: this work matters. The proposed aims of green guidance - supporting people to build a meaningful relationship with themselves, others, and the world; to develop solidarity and a sense of contribution; to better understand the changing world of work; to imagine alternative futures; and to take action for ecological and social transformation - none of this is a luxury or a niche. It is central to the evolving role of career guidance. And despite the relevant questions around our impact in the grand scheme of things, we believe that every little effort counts. This shift may feel uncertain - but it is also necessary, and full of potential. We don't have to be perfect or have all the answers. But by acting with integrity, humility, and imagination, we *can* make a difference.

Let's begin.

About the book

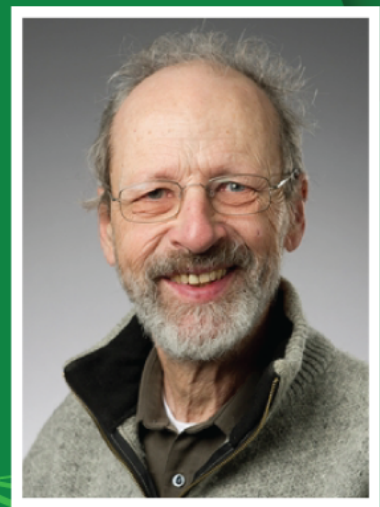
Green jobs, white jobs, or brown jobs?

What sets this handbook apart is its balance of strategic vision and action. It translates complex policy objectives into concrete steps that practitioners can apply, whether they are working in educational career guidance, employment services, or community development.

In a time when environmental responsibility is no longer optional, Exploring Green Guidance empowers practitioners to become catalysts for positive change. It is inspiring, rigorously developed, and highly usable, and will undoubtedly support Europe's journey toward a more sustainable and resilient future. Green Guidance policies and practice are crucial in this turn-around.

I am so pleased to see the EU-funded Green Guidance project taking up the challenge of unfolding Green Guidance, a concept which I first introduced, internationally, 30 years ago. It is high time.

Prof. em. Dr. Peter Plant



Exploring green guidance:

A handbook
for practitioners

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