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Counselling for Caregivers

Unit 8:  
Career and Vocational  
Guidance



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

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# Unit 8: Career and Vocational Guidance

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## Unit 8: Career and Vocational Guidance

### Introduction

From the earliest years of our lives, we are asked to consider what we want to be when we grow up. Parents and guardians carefully plan and manage their children's educational experiences in the hope of preparing them for successful careers.

As a caregiver, you are faced with the challenge of helping children and youth identify and achieve their career goals. Young people tend to have limited information about the types of jobs that are available to them. Lack of information leads many to make unrealistic decisions about careers. Many youth are not sure of what they want to do. Some of them are not even aware of their own talents. You can help them get the information they need to make realistic and satisfying career choices.

Another of your roles as a caregiver is to help children and youth develop the qualities they need to be successful in the job market. Certain qualities can contribute to success, such as: the willingness to work hard and do more than the bare minimum; good spoken and written communication skills; dependability; and the ability to work well with others.

Career guidance becomes more and more challenging as the realities of the workplace change. At one time the types of work available and the skills required changed very little from one generation to another. Now, times are changing so quickly that it's hard to predict what the next 20, 10, or even 5 years will bring. In these rapidly changing times, qualities such as flexibility, creativity, and the desire to be a lifelong learner have become important.

This unit will help you to explore ways that you as a caregiver can help children and youth to decide on a career plan and gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the job market, now and in the future. After exploring your own knowledge and skills in Lesson 1, you will learn how to find out information about different careers and how to help youth explore careers in Lesson 2. Lessons 3, 4, and 5 will examine gender bias and stereotypes and the ability to recognise talents of

the youth you are working with, as well as helping them develop employability skills. Finally, in Lessons 6 and 7, you will learn how to help youth make career plans and find employment.



## Objectives

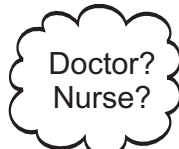
At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Differentiate between a career, a vocation, and life skills.
2. Identify sources of information and disseminate information on careers and life skills.
3. Discuss gender biases and stereotypes in vocational and career choices and suggest ways of eliminating them.
4. Recognise the talents of children and youth.
5. Advise youth on career programmes and help them to plan for these.

# Lesson One



## Personal Exploration



This section begins with an opportunity to explore what you bring to the area of career guidance, as well as what you would like to know. It goes on to define what we mean by the terms “career,” “vocational guidance,” and “life skills.”

As you begin your work on this unit, take a few moments to think about your own career experience and what you can bring from it to your work with youth who are planning their careers.

### Activity 1

When you were a youth, was there a particular occupation that appealed to you? What was it? What did you like about it?

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How do you feel about the career path you have followed? Why did you end up making the career choice(s) you did?

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What talents and personal qualities help you to be successful in your career?

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Even though the youth you counsel may have very different talents and goals than you, you still have valuable life experience to offer them. Based on your own experience, what advice would you give to youth who are planning their careers?

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We are all different people, with unique abilities and dreams. One of the biggest challenges in counselling youth about their careers is to be able to really get to know them: to see their potential and understand their hopes. As you have worked through the various units in this course, you have learned various strategies and approaches to help you get to know children.



### Activity 2

Think about communication strategies you have learned in other units that would help you when you are counselling youth about career plans. List them here:

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Does your list include some of the following?

- Giving youth your full attention.
- Listening, not talking or giving advice.
- Being respectful of their ideas.
- Encouraging youth to expand on their statements by asking questions and checking to see if you are understanding correctly.
- Helping youth to explore possibilities so they can come to their own conclusions.

The world of work is changing so quickly that it is difficult to keep abreast of new career possibilities. While it's useful to know about various careers, it can be more important to know where to find information about them.



### Activity 3

What occupations are you familiar with? List as many as you can.

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What are some ways to find out about new career possibilities?

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As you can see, you already have some useful skills and information for counselling youth about their career plans. We will be building on them in this unit.

### Some Definitions

Some of the terms that you will be seeing in this unit are “career,” “vocation,” “vocational guidance,” and “life skills.” Let’s begin by defining each of these.

#### Career

The word “career” is used to refer to one’s progress through his/her working life, particularly in a certain profession or line of work. When we talk about a “career in teaching” or a “career in technology” we mean that a person will study and then work in teaching or in technology, perhaps changing jobs from time to time in the interests of advancement. The goals that one has for one’s working life are called “career goals,” and planning how we will reach them is called setting a “career path.” Carpentry, engineering, nursing, hospitality, social work, banking, and farming are just a few of the many possible careers people might choose.

**Vocation**

In its most usual use, the word “vocation” refers to a strong feeling within an individual that they are meant to do a certain job. Sometimes people feel that they are “called” to a particular kind of life or work, such as nursing or a religious life. The word “vocation” can also be used to refer to a trade or profession.

**Vocational Guidance**

Vocational guidance is the process through which an individual is helped to choose a suitable occupation, make the necessary preparations for it (such as enrolling in a training programme), enter into it, and develop in it. This is a continuous process since an individual is likely to re-evaluate the career choice at various points in his/her life and may make changes at any point in his/her career.

**Life Skills**

The term “life skills” refers to the various psychosocial and interpersonal skills that lead people to a healthy and productive life. These skills include the ability to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, cope with life situations, and manage oneself. Life skills may include actions for oneself or towards others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment in order to make it more conducive to good health.

Life skills competencies are necessary for the total development of children and youth. These competencies are the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and types of behaviour that children and youth need to become healthy, happy, and well-balanced individuals. Children who have these competencies will be able to meet the challenges of work and life in a complex and fast-paced world.



**Activity 4**

Look through newspaper advertisements to see if there are any careers you could add to the list you made in Activity 3.

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*(continued on next page)*

Do you know someone who believes he/she has a vocation; that is, that he/she is doing work that he/she is called to do? Ask when and how that person came to know what it was he/she wanted to do. Summarise the answer here:

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Take time to visit two workplaces. List the careers found in those workplaces:

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Which skills would you consider to be life skills; that is, which ones are important in order to have a happy, productive life?

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Did you think of these life skills? If not, add them to your list:

- Communication skills.
- Ability to handle conflict.
- Ability to manage personal stress and to help others manage theirs.
- Ability to work with others in decision-making activities.
- Ability to listen to others' points of view.
- Ability to work as a member of a team.
- Ability to gather and use information.
- Ability to recognise your strengths and weaknesses and to use them accordingly.

# Lesson Two

## Finding and Providing Information on Career Possibilities

Our world is full of interesting occupations. The activity that follows asks you to explore a few of them.



### Activity 5

#### Working in a Beauty Salon

List 5 tools found in a salon.

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List 5 activities that take place in a salon.

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Why do people go to salons?

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What skills are useful for staff working in a salon?

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What kind of training does a beauty salon manager require?

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#### Working with Animals

List 5 activities that should take place in animal shelters.

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A village dipping tank is one place at which domestic animals are cared for. List all the activities that take place in a dipping tank.

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*(continued on next page)*

How do veterinarians get money?

**Working as a Miner**

Write a short story about a person that works in the mines. Mention, for example, the kind of mineral the person mines, the types of activities miners engage in, how they dress up for work and why they wear that clothing.

**Working in a Hospital**

List all of the different kinds of careers you might find in a hospital and the type of training required for each.

*(continued on next page)*





Were some parts of these learning activities difficult to do? Sometimes, because we are familiar with an occupation, we think we know more about it than we actually do. It is important that we research new careers we may hear about, but also that we pay attention to the work that people do around us: watching what people do and asking lots of questions.

### Sources of Information

In Lesson 1 of this unit, you listed possible sources of information about careers. How many of the following possibilities did you include?

- Local libraries.
- Media advertising (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV).
- Government labour office.
- Shopping markets with bulletin boards for advertising.
- Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in your community.
- Churches (the priest, minister, or pastor may be able to help).
- Employment bureaus (for example, TEBA for miners).
- Friends who have careers.
- Current employees of an organisation (a farmer, business person, medical doctor, teacher, builder, radio announcer, etc.).
- Past employees of an organisation.
- Paying visits to an organisation of your career interest (such as a hospital for a physiotherapist, radiographer, or nurse).
- From work sites in the immediate community (such as at a mosque, church, school, or farm).
- Professionals (pilot, engineer, lawyer, etc.).
- Job attachments (such as working with a construction company).
- Internet websites.

As a caregiver, you need to familiarise yourself with these sources so that you are able to direct children and youth to them when they require more information than you can give them. You can help them develop skills in reading, writing, making calls, and searching the internet to find information on job opportunities.

## Helping Youth Explore Possible Careers

Youth and children have a limited knowledge of the range of possible occupations and careers. This can contribute to unrealistic career aspirations. As a caregiver, you will need to ensure that youth have appropriate career information.

In order to make an informed choice, youth need to have a realistic picture of occupations they are considering: the working conditions, the tasks that are involved, the qualifications and education required, the salary, the job opportunities, and so on.

You can help youth gather this information by:

- Collecting and discussing written information with them.
- Going for industrial visits where they will get the information directly from the employers.
- Inviting different professionals to come and talk to them.
- Helping them find volunteer or part-time work in different industries.
- Encouraging them to volunteer their services in different organisations or work centres.
- Encouraging them to share career/vocation information with one another.
- Pointing out postings on bulletin boards found in shopping centres.
- Encouraging them to get information through the media.

### Job Shadowing

Attach a youth for a day or more to a person who has a career that the youth is interested in. For example, a youth might dress appropriately for working in an electricity station, start the day with the person he or she is attached to, help with the work the person being shadowed does and so on. A youth attached to a receptionist might work in an office taking calls, recording messages, and receiving visitors.

**Job Mentoring**

Identify individuals with careers of interest. Invite them to address the youth about their own careers and to bring posters, objects, and audio/video tapes to listen to or view, as well as reading materials about the careers for display or distribution.

**Job Volunteering**

Youth can assist in a company and do some tasks without expecting pay but to gain experience in doing the job. This can be done on a part-time basis.

In the countryside, there may be a limited number of career possibilities. Church and school careers might be common because almost all communities have a faith-based organisation and a school to cater to children there. These institutions could also have a secretary or receptionist. Youth can find out more about these careers by talking with the people who work in them.

As a caregiver, you can help children and youth learn about careers that might be possible for them outside the community. Children may be interested in a career that would involve going to a larger community, either for training or to work. If this is the case, they will need support not only to learn more about the career but to move outside of their home community. Think about how you might help Thuli, in the story below, fulfil her dream of becoming a teacher.

**Story 1: Thuli**

Thuli lives with her aunt in a rural area. For as long as she can remember, Thuli has wanted to be a teacher. She admired her teachers and worked very hard at her school. At home, she found great satisfaction in helping her younger nieces and nephews with their lessons. Thuli did so well with her studies that she was awarded a scholarship to a teachers college in a city several hours from her home. At first Thuli was delighted, but as the time grew closer for her to leave home, she began to talk about passing up the scholarship and finding some kind of work in her community. When you talk with her about this, she finally admits that she is frightened of being alone in the city.



Can you think of some ways that you could help Thuli become comfortable with moving to the city to take advantage of her scholarship?

Perhaps you have a friend in the city who would help her get acquainted or know of an organisation where she could meet some friends. Maybe she just needs someone to go with her for the first few days until she is settled.

Youth may not admit that they are afraid to leave their familiar surroundings for a new career, but we need to be aware of that possibility and provide all the help we can for them in making the transition. While they are at the stage of exploring careers, introducing them to a friendly and helpful career mentor can make a big difference.



### Activity 6

List the careers of people you know in the community and of your relatives. For each of the careers you list, identify:

- A person or organisation that could be a good resource to give information about the career.
- Someone who could be a mentor for a youth interested in that career (perhaps the youth could job shadow with this person).
- An organisation where the youth could volunteer in order to get some experience related to the career.

You may need to use a separate piece of paper for this activity.

Career	Resource	Mentor	Volunteer Opportunity

Lesson  
ThreeEliminating Gender Bias and  
Stereotypes in Career Choices**Activity 7**

Wanjiru's career dream is to become a pilot. Her parents are uneasy about her goal and find it hard to support her in it. Give three reasons why Wanjuri's parents might discourage her.

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How do you feel about a girl or woman becoming a pilot?

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Why do you feel this way?

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Do you believe that males and females could do the same jobs if they had the opportunity to do so? Why or why not?

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When you are counselling children about their career choices, you will be faced with the problem of gender bias and stereotypes. Certain jobs are commonly believed to be for men only while others are supposed to be suited only for women. For example, it is often thought that a woman's place is in the home doing domestic chores. Men, on the other hand, are supposed to be engineers, pilots, builders, and so on. They are not expected to take an active role in domestic chores.

One of your roles as a caregiver is to educate both boys and girls that one can do any job for which one meets the requirements. They must understand that gender should not be a major determinant in career and vocation selection.

Gender is the social dimension of being male and female. There are two ways of looking at this definition:

- Gender identity is the sense of being male or female, which most children acquire by the time they are three years old.
- Gender roles refer to a set of expectations regarding how females or males should think, act, or feel.

Gender bias begins early in life when parents start dressing children differently depending on whether they are male or female, giving them different toys, treating them differently, and having different expectations for them. The differences are reinforced as children watch and imitate their parents fulfilling these traditional roles. Culture, the schools, peers, and the media reinforce what children have learned from their parents.

Gender stereotypes are the beliefs and impressions that people have about males and females. Males are believed to be dominant, aggressive, independent, and enduring go-getters. Females are widely believed to be soft, caring, more helpful, weak, and emotional. It is assumed that females are not ambitious, are unable to do certain jobs, and want to stay at home and nurture children.



### Activity 8

Give examples of gender bias and stereotypes that are common in your community and your place of work.

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Look back at the list of careers you created earlier. Which ones tend to be male-dominated?

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Which are female-dominated?

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### Activity 9

What gender biases and stereotypes are evident in this picture?

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Why are these gender biases and stereotypes a problem?

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The problems with gender biases and stereotypes include the following:

- Girls and women often are not encouraged to use their talents, which deprives them of satisfaction and deprives society of the contributions they could make.
- Men and boys are expected to act in certain ways and do certain kinds of work, so they also face restrictions in the careers they choose.
- Because girls and women are expected to be passive and helpless, they are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation within and outside of their homes.

*Rev. Margaret* is a Methodist Church priest in my community. She visits the sick in the nearby hospital accompanied by church youth who sing to the patients and do their chores while the Reverend talks to them individually. She preaches in the churches of my community. Once a month, she is allowed to preach in the prison in the nearest town and the local radio broadcasts her sermons and her verbal interactions with the prisoners. Some church members accompany her on the last Wednesday of the month when she visits elderly people in the community, giving them food, clothes and cleaning their homes. I enjoy the Bible Studies she conducts through theatre during school vacations.



### Activity 10

What contributions is Rev. Margaret making to this community?

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What challenges of discrimination may she face in her career?

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What are the advantages to having a woman priest working in a community?

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How can we work to eliminate gender stereotypes and biases? Here are some ideas:

- Ask community leaders and special groups to focus on sensitising the community to gender biases and stereotypes, with the goal of encouraging children and youth to appreciate their own unique capabilities. This can be done in collaboration with NGOs, government initiatives on gender, and development sensitisation programmes.
- Invite non-traditional role models to talk to the community and the children and youth about gender biases and stereotypes.
- As a caregiver, model gender equality and talk to children about gender bias and stereotypes at home and in the community.
- Collect magazines and newspapers that show gender bias and stereotypes. Watch for examples in radio and TV programmes. Discuss these with children to identify the elements that portray gender bias and stereotypes; for example, a picture showing a committee that is predominantly male.



### Activity 11

Wanjiru is one of the young girls in your village. She wants to be a pilot. Her parents have tried to discourage her by insisting that flying aeroplanes is a man's job. Because you are a caregiver, Wanjiru has come to you for advice.

Why do you think Wanjiru's parents are discouraging her from being a pilot and encouraging her instead to be a secretary?

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What ideas do you have to help Wanjiru and her parents?

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• It is important to recognise that her parents may want to protect Wanjiru from the difficulties she will face as a woman in a profession that is traditionally male. You will want to ensure that Manjiru has a realistic view of the career she wishes to enter and the additional challenges she may face as a woman in that career. Once you feel that Manjiru is well-informed and serious about becoming a pilot, you might help her discuss the matter with her parents to reassure them that she is aware of the challenge she is undertaking and is prepared to work hard to be a success.

## Lesson Four



# Recognising the Talents of Children and Youth

We all have talents; that is, areas where we show special abilities or aptitudes. We may be talented in music, mathematics, sports, getting along with other people, art, creative thinking, writing, or dancing, to name just a few possibilities. Often we show our talent from an early age, but the way that our talent develops depends on the environment we find ourselves in; that is, on the encouragement we receive from parents and guardians, mentors, and the educational system.

Sometimes people are inspired to develop their talents through the example of a mentor. They may see a particular skill in someone they adore, practise it constantly, and develop expertise in it.



### Activity 12

What is one of your talents?

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How and when did you realise that you had this talent?

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What have you done to develop this talent?

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What other talents would you like to develop and be skilled in?

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What are you doing to develop these skills?

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### Helping Youth See Their Talents

As a caregiver, you should get to know your children/youth as individuals and find out what is special about each of them. It may be their artistic ability, their athletic ability, or their ability to make people laugh. Perhaps a child is a wonderful storyteller, or is good at fixing things that are broken. You have an important role in helping children recognise and develop their talents.



#### Activity 13

Think of a child you know. What special talents does that child have?

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How can you encourage those talents? (Or how have you encouraged them?)

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As a caregiver, you need to observe the children/youth under your care to see what talents they have, encourage them to develop those talents, and help them see how they could use those talents in a future career. You can expose them to different relevant careers and/or vocations by:

- Inviting professional experts and business people to address them about the job opportunities available.
- Assigning activities to explore their talents. As you do this, avoid suppressing talents; encourage both sexes to do what they like to do. Avoid making judgements about what a male or female child should do.
- Noticing their personalities and considering how they would fit with particular careers. For example, a quiet, thoughtful child might not do well as a radio announcer.

- Considering the socioeconomic and ethnic values of a community and how they relate to careers. For example, a community may have a strong farming industry, which creates opportunities for careers in that area.
- Inviting female and male mentors who have careers that are not stereotypically male or female (for example, a female chef, female pilot, male nurse, female electrician, or female preacher/religious minister), to give a talk about their careers and answer questions from the children and youth concerning their experiences with the public and any obstacles they had to overcome in pursuit of their career choices.
- Discussing peer influences and decisions people have to make when deciding on careers.
- Talking to children/youth and their parents or relatives about interests and talents the children or youth have shown.

### Special Activity

Ask the children and youth in your care to discuss their talents. Children may identify their own talents, but they can also help other children identify their special abilities.

Discuss with the children and youth ways that they can develop their skills; for example,

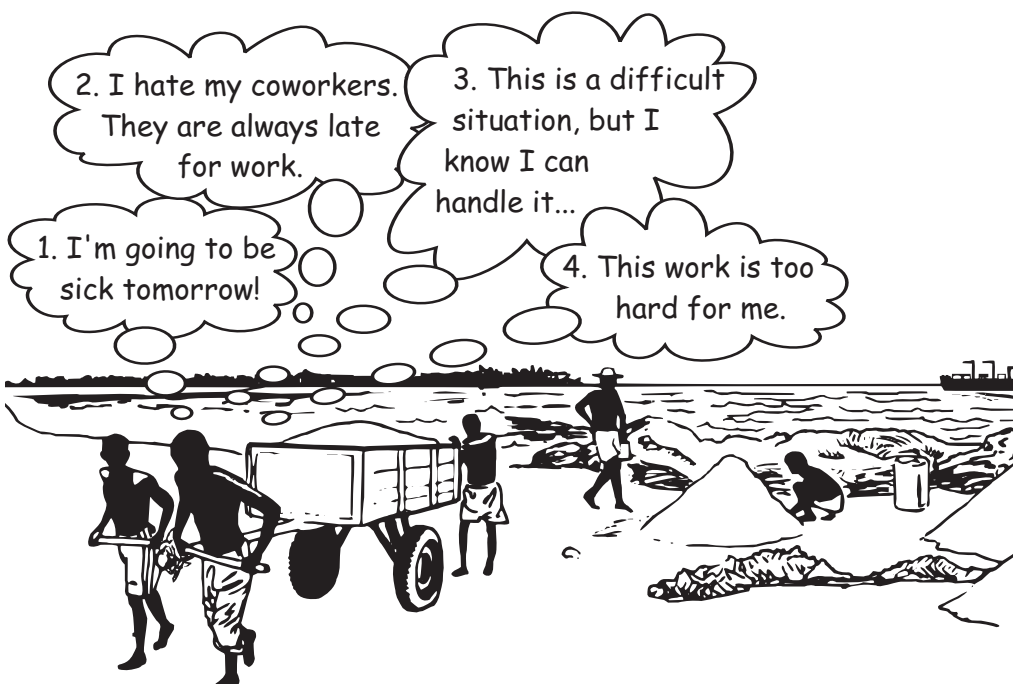
- Through attachment to a person who has similar skills (job shadowing).
- Projects to raise funds for community needs.
- Volunteering at school and in the home; for example, working with the cook or cleaning and beautifying the classroom.
- Being mentored by people in the community.
- Creating displays of their artwork or arranging performances to highlight their artistic skills.

# Lesson Five : Helping to Develop Life and Employability Skills



Helping youth make career plans is only one aspect of the career and vocational counselling you will do as a caregiver. It will be equally important to help them develop skills they will need to be good workers.

Look at the pictures below. Which of the four statements represents the type of person you would hire if you were an employer?



### Activity 14

If you were an employer, why might you prefer to hire an individual thinking thought 3? What personal qualities does this person show that would make him an effective employee?

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### Activity 14 (continued)

Make a list of some positive statements that employees might make; for example, "practice makes perfect."

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Make a list of negative comments that employees might make; for example, "I hate my boss."

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Thoughts 1, 2, and 4 show negative attitudes and thinking. How could you change each of these to make it a positive statement?

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What are some qualities of effective employees?

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You will have noticed that a person who thinks thought 3 meets challenges with confidence and positive thinking. An individual who thinks one of the other statements may be avoiding work, have poor relationships with co-workers, or lack confidence in his/her abilities.

### Teaching Life Skills

In the earlier units of this course, various ways to help children and youth learn to be responsible, express their thoughts and feelings, make decisions, and have confidence in themselves were discussed. The activity below gives you an opportunity to think about the things you

do to help children learn these life skills, which will, in turn, help them to become valuable employees.



### Activity 15

In earlier units, you learned to communicate with children in ways that show them you have confidence in their ability to solve problems and handle difficult situations. Describe a conversation or interaction you had recently with a child or youth that encouraged these skills.

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The skills that help people live successful, balanced lives and that make them valued employees are learned from an early age. We have learned how to communicate with children, but there are other ways to teach employability skills:

- Children and youth should actively participate, as appropriate to their age, in domestic chores such as taking care of siblings, working on the family farm, cooking for the family, cleaning their room and home, looking after cattle, getting water, and collecting firewood. Participating in essential household chores lets children play an important role in their home and helps them develop confidence in their ability to carry out tasks successfully.
- Children and youth should be expected to be on time for school, stay until the end of the day, and not miss classes unnecessarily. They should be told that attending school is their job and that the same behaviour will be expected in the workplace.
- Children should demonstrate good personal hygiene and a positive outlook on a day-to-day basis at home, school, and on the playground (for example, washing themselves and their clothes, not littering on the premises, avoiding vulgar

language, and saying good things about people). They can be reminded that these skills and attitudes will help them be successful in later life.

- Children should respect parents, guardians, and teachers and abide by rules at home and school. This is part of being a responsible citizen.
- Participating in athletic activities can help children develop perseverance, manage stress, and work as members of a team.

### **Planning a Career Programme**

As a caregiver it is your role to help prepare youth for employment by introducing them to the world of work. Your career programme should aim at helping youth get started in a career of their choice. As indicated in Lesson 2, you need to be well informed about available career opportunities in the community and at large.

You should talk to youth about the employment situation in the country to help them understand that it may take a while to get employment. This should not cause them to give up. The programme should start by informing them about:

- Educational requirements of the job of their choice. Show them a sample Curriculum Vitae (resumé) and help them think about what they would put in their own resumé.
- Practical experience needed in the case of someone who has no special certification (for example, a farmer, fisher, or domestic worker). Help them to find information on employment; for example, looking at the advertisements in the local newspapers or magazines.
- The possibility of learning a trade through an apprenticeship.
- How to prepare job application letters, fill in job application forms, and prepare for a job interview. Keep samples of letters and forms to show them.

## Preparing a Job Application Letter



### Activity 16

List what you think are the essentials of a good application letter.

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If you haven't already included these points, add them to your list:

- The letter should be typed.
- It should be neat and grammatically correct.
- The letter should be brief.
- It should contain both the address of the person writing the letter and the prospective employer's address.
- You should use an appropriate salutation (Dear Sir/Madam).
- The body of the letter should be logically presented.
- It should contain an appropriate complementary close (such as "Yours sincerely").
- It should be personally signed.

## Preparing a Curriculum Vitae (Resumé)

Another document you should be able to help youth prepare is a Curriculum Vitae (CV). This document should contain the following information:

### Personal Information

- The name of the applicant.
- The place and date of birth.
- The sex (female/male).
- Nationality.
- Postal address.
- Phone number (if any).

**Academic Qualifications**

- Highest qualification of the applicant.
- Institutions attended (i.e. schools, colleges, universities).
- Subjects studied (transcript).
- Year of completion.

**Practical Work Experience**

- The candidate should list jobs in the order that they were held (the latest, or current, job listed first) , including the job title, a description of duties performed, the name and address of the organisation and the dates of employment.

**Achievements**

- Professional qualifications that the applicant may have (certificates and/or diplomas).
- Medals/awards.
- Recognitions.
- Involvement in community work.
- Participation and roles played in workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.

**Hobbies**

- The candidate should list activities of interest that he/she is involved in, such as netball, volleyball, soccer, art, fishing, swimming, singing, golf, etc. (extra-curricula activities).

**Referees**

- A candidate should give names of one or two people who may be called by the potential employer to give additional information about the applicant. Advise candidates to give names of referees who are in a position to give information about them but not close relatives. Suitable referees include teachers, pastors, community leaders, etc.

As a caregiver, remember to advise the applicant that the CV must be sent together with a covering letter and copies of any certificates and testimonials. Remind the applicants that they must never send their original certificates or testimonials. Originals should be carried when the applicant is going for an interview.

### **How to Prepare for an Interview**

Another important role is that of preparing the candidate or applicant for an interview. Here are some suggestions for you:

- Encourage the applicant to get as much information as possible about the potential employer. They might talk to current employees, if available, and use information from the library. This will help them to answer any questions asked about why they want to work in that organisation.
- The applicant should wait to be invited by the interviewer or panelists before sitting down.
- The applicant should be able to talk openly, convincingly, and with confidence about his or her skills, achievements, and experiences.
- The applicant should be punctual and dressed appropriately for the job (not too sweet, sophisticated, or shabby).
- Remind the applicant to carry the invitation letter, original certificates, and original testimonials as they may be asked for verification of the copies submitted previously.
- The applicant should avoid any arguments with the interview panel, remain calm, and listen so as to be able to respond appropriately. When not clear about the question, the applicant should not hesitate to ask the panelists to rephrase it.
- The applicant should come prepared to ask the panelists questions that relate to the job (for example, the salary scale and benefits, if not given in the interview or advertisement).

## Job Preparation Activities

With youth looking for employment, carry out some group activities, such as:

- Collect various job application letters and CVs (the youth may bring some too), read them to the youth, and discuss whether the individuals that wrote them meet the requirements for specific jobs.
- Divide the youth into small groups and ask them to take turns telling others in the group about the following:
  - A job they are applying for.
  - The CV they are preparing.
  - How they will dress for the interview.
- Ask the youth to find advertisements from newspapers or magazines and bring them to class for group discussion of the following topics:
  - The job title.
  - The job requirements / qualifications.
  - A description of the work.
  - The required experience.
  - The salary package.
- Ask the youth to write applications responding to some of the advertisements the group has discussed using the information provided.
- For each of the careers the youth choose: work with them to collect relevant information about the requirements for their career; help them to prepare a CV and collect advertisements that relate to their career interests for further discussion and practice applications; help them to prepare for an interview.
- Use role playing to simulate and practise going through an interview.



# Lesson Six : Helping Youth Make a Career Plan



Farmer?  
Teacher?



“Now, what career path is suitable for me? My teacher has advised that we should start now thinking about our future careers.

My mother is a lawyer in a business in the city; my father is a nurse at the general hospital. I don't think I could do either of their jobs.

Maybe I can farm like Grandfather because I like cheese and would get a lot of satisfaction from raising dairy cattle. But it's hard work: sweating, rough hands, not exactly a suit-and-tie job.

Teaching seems to be easier; telling students things to do and marking their work. But, students are sometimes nasty. I would hate disciplining them.”



What do I do well? I take good care of my pets by cleaning them and their houses, feeding them, and playing with them.

What do I really like to do? I like to be around pets and reading about them.

What is important to me—independence, power, health, security, love, success, adventure, comfort, knowledge? Working alone with the family pets and caring for them. The dogs wag their tails when they see me and I'm happy for their love. I read books about the pets so that I can understand and meet their needs. Last year, I joined the team at school that chose to visit the zoo to learn about animals.



What lifestyle do I want? A life around animals might satisfy me.

What skills do I have? I have learned what pets like and how to look after them, nurse them when they're sick, and play with them.

How can I manage myself well? By being healthy, strong, and available for the pets, caring for them, and loving them.

On the previous page, we see a youth, Musa, in the process of exploring his career options. You can help the youth you know arrive at their career plans by asking them the kinds of questions that Musa is asking himself.

Meet with a youth you know to discuss her/his career plans, which you will assess in Activity 17. Ask the following questions:

- What are some of the talents you have? How could you use those talents to earn a living?
- What skill(s) do you have? Experience(s)? Education?
- What other skills would you like to develop? How could you do this?
- What are you presently doing to develop your skills?
- Which of these skills have you learned from parents, friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers, and members of your community or church?
- What are some of the careers that you have considered? Why are you considering those particular careers?
- Give examples of career plans that might be possible for you and reasons for your choice.



### Activity 17

Summarise the youth's skills, interests, and anything else that may help him/her to decide on a career.

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What are some careers that the youth has considered?

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How realistic do you think this youth's career plans are at this point?

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*(continued on next page)*

### Activity 17 (continued)

What information or experiences could you provide to the youth to support her/his career planning?

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### Supporting Youth in Pursuing Further Education or Training

Anita graduated from high school last year and is preparing to go to university or college. The following list shows how she is preparing herself for further educational opportunities.

- Reading university / college (tertiary institutions) calendars.
- Talking to graduates from the institutions.
- Visiting the institutions that are within reach to look at the environment.
- Writing application letters to the institutions.
- Inquiring about scholarships and applying for them.
- Searching websites for organisations that sponsor special programmes, filling out the forms, and submitting them online.
- Contacting businesses and industries about possible volunteer opportunities relevant to her educational plans.
- Job-shadowing in relevant careers.
- Attending job markets.
- Meeting with the school career guidance counsellor.
- Collecting brochures and any other written materials about the career that interests her.



### Activity 18

Interview a college or university student about how he/she prepared him/herself to attend that institution. Summarise the main points here. Are there other ways that he/she had not considered?

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Share the information from your interview with the youth in your care. Encourage them to ask similar questions of other students or persons who are working in a career that they are considering.

If you are involved with several youth, suggest that they each carry out a similar interview and arrange a session during which they share the information they have gathered.

# Lesson Seven



## Helping Youth Find Employment

Youth that you are working with have graduated and are ready to look for work. While they are waiting for a job opening, it's a good idea for them to volunteer in an organisation where they might like to work. This will give them some experience that can be included in their CVs. It also gives employers a chance to get to know them and keep them in mind when job openings occur, and helps the youth decide what to look for in a workplace. Remember that looking for work is stressful and youth can easily become discouraged by rejection. Offer lots of encouragement.

When the youth are ready to search for a job, suggest that they:

- Read and research about the job.
- Complete an application letter or fill in the required application form.
- Prepare a detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- Contact not less than 3 people who know them well and ask them to be their referees.
- Make copies of their professional and birth certificates and get them endorsed by the appropriate legal personnel (police, lawyer, etc.).
- Prepare copies of relevant transcripts.

As a caregiver, you need to continue talking to the youth about the employment situations in the community and help them to understand that it sometimes takes a while to get employment. This will help them not to get discouraged if they have to wait a long time for a job or even for an interview.



### Activity 19

Prepare a checklist of items to help youth remember when they are job-hunting.

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Did your list include the following?

- Know places to find information about sources of employment; for example, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.
- Have transcripts and certificates/diplomas to show that they meet the educational requirements for the job.
- Show practical experience in the CV and/or letters of recommendation from previous employers.
- Know how to prepare job application letters and fill in job application forms.
- Get ready for a job interview in case the applicant is short-listed and invited to appear for selection.
- Keep original copies of the certificates/diplomas and transcripts in a safe place, but attach copies to the application letter.
- Follow up on the application by telephoning or personally delivering the application. This will ensure that the application arrives on time. (If it is lost in the mail, the applicant may have to submit another copy of the application.) Also, the applicant will know where to go in case of an interview or follow-up visit.

### **Job Application Activities**

- Refer to Lesson 5 for more information about the preparation of the required documents. Check that documents provide the necessary information.
- Share the application letter with someone for corrections and suggestions. This person should check that the application is relevant to the advertisement and follows the correct format. A local language teacher is a good resource.
- Address an envelope that is large enough to hold all the documents that are being sent, using the information given in the advertisement. Be sure to use enough stamps for mailing. (Confirm this with post office personnel.)
- Prepare for a possible interview by researching prospective employers and similar businesses. The internet is a good source of information.



## Summary

This unit on Career and Vocational Guidance is designed to help you, the caregiver, to help youth to answer these very important questions:

- What shall I do with my life?
- What job am I best suited for?

As indicated in the lessons above, vocational guidance is a process that aims at helping the individual discover inner resources, develop them, and use them to the best of his or her ability. It is a process through which youth are given relevant information to help realise their professional goals and potential.

We are living in a time of rapid change, and this has important implications for career planning. In the past people would work at one career (and often one job) throughout their lives. Now, young people can expect to have several careers in the course of their lifetime. To be successful, they will need to be flexible, creative, self-motivated, and able to innovate. They must plan to continually learn and upgrade their skills throughout their lifetimes. As a caregiver, you will need to prepare children and youth for this reality.

It is the individual's responsibility to show concern for the well-being of fellow citizens. He/she can make beneficial contributions to society even while benefitting from it. Youth and children can contribute to the community by becoming active with community involvement programmes, voluntary welfare organisations, self-help groups, community development councils, community centres, clubs, resident committees, and religious organisations.

Ministries of Education and Labour have developed life skills, career, and vocational programmes and distributed these to schools. These are comprehensive packages that contain lessons to help youth/children to be aware of, acquire, and apply their skills in all areas of expertise. Caregivers are encouraged to introduce peer support programmes as well. In addition, as we have seen in this unit, caregivers can find useful resources for career guidance in their local community.



## Self-Assessment Exercise

These questions will help you review the content of this unit. Don't hesitate to look back through the unit to ensure that you have the best possible answers.

### Question 1

What are some things you can do to help a six-year-old child in your care begin to develop employability and life skills?

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### Question 2

A sixteen-year-old youth, Efi, asks you for help in planning a career. You know that he is good at working with his hands. He is not a top student but works hard and attends school regularly. How could you help him identify a possible career?

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### Question 3

What could you tell Efi about career possibilities in your community?

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Question 4

Tandi, 16, has decided she must leave school to find work so she can support her family. You know that she has good grades, is a hard worker, and wanted to become a teacher. What advice would you give her about her career?

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Question 5

What sources of financial aid might be available to Tandi if she were to continue her schooling?

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Question 6

Tandi has already found a summer job for which she would like to apply. How could you help her with her application?

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## Suggested Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise

### Question 1

To help children develop employability and life skills:

- Model and teach good communication and problem-solving skills.
- Encourage them to participate in family chores (as appropriate to their age).
- Expect them to be on time for school.
- Encourage good personal hygiene and a positive outlook.
- Encourage them to abide by rules and show respect for parents, guardians, and teachers.
- Encourage them to take part in athletic activities.

### Question 2

Ask him what career possibilities he knows and has thought about. If his knowledge is limited, help him explore more possibilities through collecting written information, visiting various worksites, or looking at job advertisements and postings. Help him look at the working conditions, tasks involved, qualifications and education required, salary, job opportunities, and so on for various jobs. Support him in realistically assessing his career options and making a plan to reach them; for example, through apprenticing or volunteering.

### Question 3

You should have listed the career possibilities that you have identified in your community which may be available to Efi.

### Question 4

Because Tandi has good grades, she may be eligible for financial assistance that would enable her to stay in school. You could begin by helping her explore these possibilities. If it is necessary for her to leave school, you could encourage her to continue with her studies on a part-time basis so that she could eventually reach her goal.

• Question 5

• You should have researched and listed specific possibilities in your  
• community.

• Question 6

• Help Tandi prepare an application letter that is typed, neat, grammati-  
• cally correct, brief, contains her address and the prospective employ-  
• er's address, uses an appropriate salutation, is logically presented, has  
• an appropriate complementary closing, and includes her signature. You  
• could also help her prepare a Curriculum Vitae if one is required.

• Help her prepare for the job interview by getting as much information  
• as possible about the potential employer. Advise her about dress and  
• conduct during the interview. Help her prepare for the interview by  
• role-playing a likely interview situation.



## References

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Santrock, J. W. (2000). *Children* 6th Edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

Additional resources can be found at [www.UNICEF.org](http://www.UNICEF.org) and on web sites related to psychological and guidance services.



## Glossary

**Career:** Refers to the path a person follows in his or her working life, especially in a certain profession or line of work.

**Curriculum vitae (or Resume):** A brief account of one's education, qualifications, previous employment, and other relevant information to use when applying for a job.

**Gender:** A set of commonly-held beliefs about differences between men and women.

**Gender bias:** Treating someone in a particular way because of their gender.

**Life skill competencies:** The knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour needed for an individual to lead a healthy, happy, and productive life.

**Life skills:** The various psychosocial and interpersonal skills that lead people to a healthy and productive life.

**Stereotypes:** Beliefs that all members of a group (such as a gender) must act in a certain way or have certain values; for example, that only a man can be a mechanic or only a woman should do domestic chores.

**Vocation:** A strong feeling within an individual that he or she is meant to do a certain kind of work.

**Vocational guidance:** The process by which a person is helped to choose a suitable occupation, make preparations for it, enter it, and develop within it.