Career guidance is a very important service for the development of human resources and enhancement of national productivity. In Singapore, professionals of various disciplines in different fields including medical and health, building and planning, engineering and social services play significant roles in career guidance for the young people who are seeking information and advice to make career decisions. The Singapore Professional Centre, which has a total membership of some 11,000 individual professionals under 30 professional bodies, has been making very valuable contributions in this particular area of community service for more than 15 years.

This paper comprises two main sections. They are Professionals’ Involvement in Career Guidance and Professionals’ Networking in Career Guidance. The first section is the recapitulation and postscript of the writer’s presentation (on a similar topic) at the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance held from 6 to 8 March 1991 at the World Trade Centre and Regional Language Centre, Singapore. The second section is the conceptual mapping and the sharing of personal experiences in the collaboration of professionals, individuals as well as organisations in career guidance. The Making of the “Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance” (a backstage tour) is used as an illustration of professional networking.

PROFESSIONALS’ INVOLVEMENT

Numerous individual professionals in their personal capacities and on voluntary basis, either upon invitation or own initiative, have been involved in career guidance in one way or another.

When the term “career guidance” is used in a loose manner or in an ordinary way, it covers giving career advice, occupation information, sharing of experiences, and serving as consultants/experts.

Very often professionals who have practised in their fields for some 3 to 5 years or more are called upon to give “counselling” (which means “advice”) to their “young acquaintances” who are children of their relatives, friends or colleagues, or students of their alma mater. This is the most commonly observed yet very informal mode of involvement in career guidance by individual professionals. A more formal mode of career guidance is the participation in seminars, panel
discussions, publications and exhibitions on career guidance. Individual professionals usually serve as the representatives or council/committee members of their respective professional bodies to contribute on career information and to share their expertise.

Another mode of involvement is to respond positively to the surveys on occupational data. This involves providing up-to-date information on their jobs and/or the "traits of the trade". These surveys are done either through confidential questionnaires by post or personal interviews. There were some 5,000 professionals of various disciplines who participated in the nation-wide research and development project on Career guidance conducted by the National Institute of Education. The development of this project, JOBS, was presented by Dr Esther Tan at the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance and published in this journal (Vol 15 No 3).

Any of these modes of professionals’ involvement, be it formal or informal, deserves great appreciation from the young people who benefit directly or indirectly from such voluntary services. Teachers, social workers, counsellors, psychologists and other professionals who are providing career guidance in their official capacities are also grateful for these types of cooperation and support which are very crucial for the provision of an effective career guidance programme or practice.

SINGAPORE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The Singapore Professional Centre (SPC) has a history of 20 years. It was mooted by the then Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, Mr John Chadwick, during his visit to Singapore in 1968. The Centre was officially opened by Mr S Rajaratnam, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 18 January 1971 to coincide with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference held in Singapore. The experiences of Singapore Professional Centre were highlighted in the brief report presented at the Conference of Commonwealth Professionals held in July 1990 at Sydney, Australia. See Appendix.

Career guidance has been one of the SPC’s community service activities for more than 15 years. The Centre staged career talks, seminars, colour slide projects and exhibitions, as well as produced printed materials such as “The Big Decision” in the 1970’s and 1980’s and “Professional Careers Profile” (1990) for teachers and students. Since 1989, the SPC has been working very closely with the Ministry of Education and the ITI Services (Pte) Ltd to hold career exhibitions cum seminars. “Career ’89”, “Career ’90” and “Career ’91” were held on a grand scale with professional standard at the World Trade Centre.

“Career ’92” is already in the process of taking the shape of a megafair. It will be incorporating...
"AHEAD '92" which is an exhibition-cum-seminar for continuing education. The title "AHEAD" which stands for Adult Higher Education And Development was coined by the writer in 1990. Regular readers of the journal, The Singapore Professionals (TSP), would have seen the success of Career '91 and be informed of the progress of Career '92 cum AHEAD '92. Papers and reports presented at the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance have been featured in the TSP Volume 15 Numbers 2,3 and 4. These issues were circulated free-of-charge to the participants and speakers of the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance. The journal is distributed to all the SPC member associations and their members who were on the mailing list of the Singapore Professional Centre and the JM Publishers (SEA) Pte Ltd.

The contributions made by The Singapore Professional Centre in promoting career guidance and providing career data networking have gained great recognition from both the public and private sectors. The credits of such successes should go to the dedicated leaders and members of the SPC Career Guidance Committee, Convention Committee and Publication Committee.

Those who deserve special mention are Mr Fong Chan Yoon, Mrs Mae-Lim Hoon Ann, Mr A K Sigamony, Dr Tay Siew Leng and Dr Alfred Wan Sai Cheong. There are two "captains" to be honoured here, namely Mr Chan Chee Wah and Mr Tan Kah Hoe for having chaired so ably and enthusiastically the Organising Committee of Career '90, Career '91 and the SPC Board of Trustees respectively.

Deep appreciation goes to the Chairman of the ITP Services (Pte) Ltd, Mr C C Chin, and his staff who have made vital contribution to the exhibition and seminars, and JM Publishers' Manager, Mr Joseph Lee, and his editorial staff and production team which played the key role in the publication and circulation of the up-to-date professional reference materials.

Above all, the enormous support and cooperation from the Ministry of Education especially from Mr Teo Lye Huat and his colleagues including Miss Tang Seok Tuan and Mr Cheong Heng Yuen in the Pastoral Care and Career Guidance Section should be applauded.

PROFESSIONALS' NETWORKING

Since the establishment of the Singapore Professional Centre, 20 years ago, its membership has now grown to 30 member professional associations which comprise some 11,000 individual professionals in Singapore. These associations represent almost all fields of professional services in this country.

The Singapore Institute of Building Limited, Institute of Engineers of Singapore, Singapore Institute of Architects, Marketing Institute of Singapore, Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers, Singapore Law Society and the Singapore National Institute of Chemistry which have been member associations of SPC and were also involved in significant events such as: The congratulatory dinner for the Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong, on 29 April 1991, at the Westin Stamford Hotel and the 25th Anniversary Charity Fund in 1990.

The network of the Singapore Professional Centre is very large though not evenly strong and efficient across all disciplines. The conceptual mapping of this complicated network of professional organisations is shown on the next page.

All these professional bodies applied to join the SPC and were accepted in accordance to the constitution of SPC. The Centre offers full member status to professional bodies where 75 per cent of their voting members have professional or academic qualification at tertiary level. Associate member status is offered to professional bodies where 20 per cent of their voting members have professional or academic qualifications at tertiary level.

The Centre is restricted by the Registrar of Societies' regulation from offering membership to unions. The Centre is not meant to be an accrediting agency for professionals. The inter-disciplinary interaction and collaboration among SPC members usually take place at conventions/seminars of common interest and concern.

The SPC has "fraternal" ties with the Commonwealth Foundation and is affiliated to the People's Association and Singapore Council of Social Service. It also has good rapport with professional centres and associations in other Commonwealth countries including Malaysia, Kenya, Jamaica, West Indies, Sri Lanka and Australia. As a matter of fact, the Singapore Professionals Centre's network is a global connection of professionals in various fields of services.

THE MAKING OF "COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CAREER GUIDANCE"

In July 1990, the Singapore Professional Centre's valuable experiences in career guidance exhibitions, seminars and publications were presented by Dr Alfred Wan and the writer at the Conference of Commonwealth Professionals at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

It aroused great interest from delegates from other Commonwealth countries. Shortly after her return to Singapore, the writer initiated the blueprint of the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance and secured a Commonwealth Foundation grant to sponsor part of the expenses for Dr Jan Lokan, the chief resource person. Dr Lokan is a Senior Research Fellow of the Australian Council on Educational Research. She was recommended by Dr Sim...
THE SPC NETWORK

Association of Business Executives  ABE
Association of Consulting Engineers-Singapore  ACES
Association of International Accountants  AIA
Association of Principals of Primary Schools  APPS
Association of Singapore Licensed Aircraft Engineers  ASLAE
Institute of Administrative Management  IAM
Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators  ICSD
Institute of Engineers of Singapore  IES
Institute of Fire Engineers  IFE
Institute of Shipping Management  IMS
Institute of Management Services  IModE
Institute of Production Engineers  IPE
Interior Designers' Association  IDA
Marketing Institute of Singapore  MIS
Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore  PSS
Singapore Actuarial Society  SABS
Singapore Association for Counselling  SAC
Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists  SAOT
Singapore Association of Social Workers  SAW
Singapore Dental Association  SDA

Present member associations of SPC.
Member associations in the past.
Professional relatedness between associations.
SPC's Affiliation

Singapore Council of Social Service  SPC
Commonwealth Liaison Unit
Commonwealth Foundation

ABE  Singapore Institute of Arbitrators  SIArb
ACES  Singapore Institute of Architects  SIA
AIA  Singapore Institute of Building Limited  SIB
APPS  Singapore Institute of Engineering Technologists  SIET
ASLAE  Singapore Institute of Food Science & Technology  SIFST
IAM  Singapore Institute of Planners  SIP
ICSA  Singapore Institute of Surveyors & Valuers  ISI
IES  Singapore Insurance Institute  SII
IFE  Singapore Law Society  SLS
IMS  Singapore Medical Association  SMA
IAM  Singapore National Institute of Chemistry  SNIC
ICSA  Singapore Nurses' Association  SNA
IDA  Singapore Nutrition and Dietetics Association  SND
MIS  Singapore Physiotherapy Association  SVA
PSS  Singapore Psychological Society  SPS
SABS  Singapore Secondary School Principals' Association  SSSPA
SAC  Singapore Society of Radiographers  SSR
SAOT  Singapore Veterinary Association  SVA
SAW  Society of Company & Commercial Accountants  SCA
SIA  Singapore Institute of Architects  SIA
SIB  Singapore Institute of Building Limited  SIB
SIET  Singapore Institute of Engineering Technologists  SIET
SIFST  Singapore Institute of Food Science & Technology  SIFST
SIS  Singapore Institute of Planners  SIP
ISI  Singapore Insurance Institute  SII
SLS  Singapore Law Society  SLS
SMA  Singapore Medical Association  SMA
SNIC  Singapore National Institute of Chemistry  SNIC
SNA  Singapore Nurses' Association  SNA
SND  Singapore Nutrition and Dietetics Association  SND
SVA  Singapore Physiotherapy Association  SVA
SPS  Singapore Psychological Society  SPS
SSSSP  Singapore Secondary School Principals' Association  SSSPA
SSR  Singapore Society of Radiographers  SSR
SVA  Singapore Veterinary Association  SVA
SCA  Society of Company & Commercial Accountants  SCA
Wong Kooi, the Director of Institute of Education.

Subsequently, the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance was incorporated into Career '91. Dr Lokan served as the keynote speaker. The staff of ITP Services (Pte) Ltd offered secretariat service.

Ninety-two Commonwealth countries' professional associations were invited to participate. Twenty-two responded and three delegates eventually attended the workshop. Among those who sent regrets, many gave encouraging words and wanted to be kept informed of future workshops/seminars.

The Hong Kong delegate, Mrs Clare Siu Ho Kar Yuk, Hong Kong Labour Department, came to know of this workshop through the contact of the Social Welfare Department's delegate to a Regional Workshop on "Children without Childhood" in October 1990. This workshop was attended by the writer too.

The other two overseas delegates were from the contacts of Conference of Commonwealth Professionals. There were more than 70 local participants mainly through the Ministry of Education's contacts with schools, and the writer's contacts in Institute of Education and Singapore Council of Social Service. The speakers and chairpersons of panel discussions were also contacts from the writer's colleagues and the SPC fellow members.

There were countless telephone calls, numerous meetings and discussions and of course, pages of documents and correspondence along the way of materialising the Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance. All went well, including the last minute of "fix and fit" for the free papers session. The three free papers are included in this issue of the SPC journal in the following pages.

The making of Commonwealth Regional Workshop on Career Guidance, from conception to evaluation, was a great expedition for the writer. It is a handy illustration of professional networking, on voluntary basis, to serve the community and promote professional practise in career guidance.

It is a meaningful and beneficial meeting for many professionals to reminisce for years.

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Dr Elena Lui Hah Wah is a lecturer at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. She has served as the chairperson on the Career Guidance Committee, Singapore Professional Centre, for the past 3 years. She is also the 1st deputy chairman of Singapore Professional Centre and the vice-president of Singapore Association of Social Workers.

APPENDIX
Professional centres Experience and future roles

Developed from the inspiration of the former Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, Mr John Chadwick, the Singapore Professional Centre was officially opened on 18 January 1971. The inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on 11 July 1970.

Since the very beginning of the SPC, the Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) saw the necessity in inter-disciplinary cooperation in a modern society with endless technology and social issues which are multi-disciplinary in nature. The SPC has grown from the original 7-member federation to a 30-member Centre, today.

The representatives of various member associations/societies, especially those who have served at the BOT for many years, are high-spirited volunteers believing in the virtue of service to the professional bodies as well as the community at large. From 1975 to 1990, several career exhibitions and seminars were held for thousands of students and future professionals. Community service and research in health and volunteer work were also launched during late 1970's and 1980's. A scheme to encourage professionals to take part in continuing education was commenced in the mid 1980's and supported by many governmental and non-governmental organisations in Singapore.

The 30 members of SPC are professional bodies encompassing a total individual membership of 11,000. Communication with these members has been maintained by the publication of an official journal, "The Singapore Professionals", and the Directory of Professionals. A special prestige Singapore Professional Visa Card and a discount scheme were mounted to serve the SPC individual members. Theme talks and exclusive tours were also organised for them for personal and professional development. Today, SPC has gained recognition from the public and private sectors. It represents professionals at national parades, dialogues with ministers, and most recently, the organising committee of the 25th Anniversary Charity Fund initiated by the Government. The success of SPC was no magic at all. It is the fruit of hard labour and strong conviction of many core members.