



Solving, Preventing, Coping: Guidance and Social Inclusion

The topic of a recent IAEVG conference, September 2004, in A Coruna, Galicia, Spain, was 'Guidance and Social Inclusion'. In his keynote speech, Peter Plant, Vice-president of IAEVG, highlighted the potential roles of guidance in combating social exclusion.

A number of recent guidance policy documents (OECD, 2004; EU, 2004; ILO 2004) consider the role of guidance in relation to a) the individual and b) society – a classical pair. Guidance is seen as a dual means to span both the development of individual competences in the lifelong learning perspective, and in terms of reaching out to those in need of support: the socially excluded.

What is social exclusion?

In most cases poverty and social exclusion are closely related. The excluded are heterogeneous, not a group. What, if anything, they have in common is their confusion, their frustration, their disillusionment, their low self-esteem and their alienation. Add those who are disadvantaged by age, sex, class, ethnicity, religious background, employment status, illiteracy, rurality and refugee status. Many others are excluded or at the risk of social exclusion. They may desperately need guidance, but often without knowing how to access such services, or even knowing about guidance services at all.

Three explanations

In the main, there are three explanations of social exclusion (Watts, 1999) the economic one, the moral one, and one which focuses on lack of cultural capital:

Economic

Social exclusion is one of the results of economic competition in the global market place. Capital, and thus workplaces, will move to the most profitable parts of the world. This is why production, and increasingly, computer-based services such as call-centres, are moving out of USA and Europe,

and to low-income countries such as India, Malaysia, and China. Only the highly skilled and flexible core of the workforce will remain in the high-income countries. The result is that the less skilled and the less flexible are gradually peeled off from the onion of the labour market. They are marginalised and excluded. A way out of this is the strategy of upskilling the labour force in a lifelong learning perspective. What is needed is 'Education, education and education'.

Guidance has a pivotal role to play in this strategy, in helping people to access training and education, to unfold their potential, to get their real competences recognised and accredited, and to follow them along on their lifelong learning path through supportive and outreaching guidance. The interest in recognising in- or non-formal competencies is part and parcel of this strategy. 'Guidance, guidance and guidance' is the mantra.

Moral

It is people's own fault that they are excluded. They are too dependent on the welfare state, morally irresponsible, and antisocial. With over-generous benefits, idleness is encouraged among the unemployed and making it economically viable for young women to become single parents. The solution is rolling back the welfare state, and controlling crime by tightening up the criminal justice system: 'Three strikes and you are out' – or rather in. In jail.

The role of *guidance*, in this picture, is to be seen in the increasing emphasis on planning: personal action plans, individual action plans, and thus like. All to encourage people to make (socially acceptable) plans for the future.

Cultural capital

People lack the networks, the links to society, and the cultural capital to make use of the many support services that are in fact available to the public. Guidance is one such help to be found – if you know how and where to find it. But some people do not have the language and the knowledge to break the codes of the system. What they need is enlightenment, more than mere information.

Guidance is one of the important helping features to help the marginalised out of the darkness in which they live, and into the light of the inclusive society. This may be done through outreach guidance services, community-based or in the workplaces for at-risk low-paid and low-skilled workers. EU-funded Leonardo da Vinci projects, for instance, have addressed these issues in terms of creating better access to guidance for those in risk of social exclusion (www.gla.ac.uk/avg) and bringing guidance to low-paid workers in the workplace in terms of ‘guidance corners’ or ‘educational ambassadors/learning advisors’ (www.gla.ac.uk/wg).

Solving, preventing, coping

If in fact guidance is to counteract social exclusion, it needs to come out of the conventional boxes in which most guidance activities are caged, for example the bureaucratic settings of which guidance is an integral part. It is surprising how much guidance is based on the assumption that people will come voluntarily to the office. This may well be the case, but will this kind of guidance reach out to the marginalized? Hardly. This point leads to the view that guidance may take three approaches in terms of a solving, a preventing, or a coping strategy, as pointed out in ‘Euro-counsel’, a pan-European action-research project (Watt, 1998):

In terms of social inclusion, guidance may have a role in patching up the malfunctions of the educational system and of the labour market. This is the *solving* part of guidance. Proactive approaches may have a more *preventive* scope. *Coping* strategies are more controversial or even a blind spot in guidance. If guidance is to play a more significant role in terms of formulating and implementing social inclusions policies, guidance may need to play the role of the Trojan Horse in the very systems of which they are an integral part. This is a challenge for guidance – both in practical and in policy terms. It requires a strong professional foundation to fulfil this role; one which includes the clients’, the users’ perspectives. It thus adds a bottom-up perspective to policy-making, which is seriously needed in much of the present international focus on leadership and policy-making in guidance.

References

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- OECD (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
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- Watt, G. (1998). *Supporting Employability: Guides to good practice in employment counselling and guidance*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
- Watts, A.G. (1999). *Mind over a matter of social exclusion*. *Careers Guidance Today*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March/April 1999.

Ibero-American guidance events

A number of professional guidance symposia and conferences were carried out in Latin America in 2004, notably

- * International Symposium of Educational and Vocational Guidance, January 2004, at the University of Carabobo, Venezuela
- * Ibero-American Forum of Educational Counselling, May 2004, in Las Tunas, Cuba
- * Interdisciplinary Congress of Counselling, July 2004, in Maracaibo, Venezuela.

All these events were attended by an international audience. For further details contact acvg11@cantv.net Earlier, in September 2003, an Ibero-American Career Guidance Congress was held in La Plata, Argentina on ‘*Current Situation and Challenges of Guidance and Counselling as a Scenario*’ (see IAEVG Newsletter # 48, 2003).

The International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICDP)

Just opened in Bruxelles, the Centre has three aims:

-To promote career development internationally as an integral part of public policies for education, training, employment and social inclusion

-To promote and support international transfer of knowledge and best practice in order to strengthen public policies, systems and practices for career development

-To promote methods and resources for evidenced-based policy-making in the field of career development through international collaboration

The Centre is as a resource for policy developers and researchers, in association with social partners and guidance practitioners, in improving career development systems that support lifelong learning and workforce development goals. During its first three years, the Centre will be hosted at CEDEFOP in Bruxelles. CEDEFOP is the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training with its base in Thessaloniki in Greece. As an agency of the European Commission, it manages research and knowledge transfer in the field of guidance in Europe. John McCarthy has been detached by the Irish Ministry of Education to establish the ICDP. He has previously worked

as a policy developer for lifelong guidance at the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. The ICDP has the institutional support of the European Commission, OECD and the World Bank, the international association support of the IAEVG, and the country support of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, UK and Ireland. Other international institutional, association and country support are welcome.

Address: ICDP, CEDEFOP, 20 Av. d'Auderghem, Bruxelles B-1049, Belgium. Tel: 00322 2333846; fax: 00322 2305824; email: jmc@cedefop.eu.int

Geronto Guidance? 3rd Age Guidance

The recent Resolution on Lifelong Guidance, May 2004 (see IAEVG Newsletter # 49, May 2004), specifically mentioned older workers as a special target group of guidance. A new EU Leonardo da Vinci programme, known as Third Age Guidance, looks into this issue (see www.gla.ac.uk/tag)

'Older workers' is by no means a fixed term – it may mean people at the age of 45+ - but career guidance has a role to play at the end of working life, and not just at the entrance to education and working life or at points of transition. 3rd Age Guidance may take several forms: preventive as well as reactive guidance are crucial in terms of both retention and re-entry, not just on the labour market, but also in relation to e.g. voluntary work. What perhaps is most important for older workers is to make *meaning* out of their often long-standing career: was it worth the effort?

The Third Age Employment Network has made a list of issues (extract below; see (www.taen.co.uk), in which guidance features importantly:

(1) Retention

Gender: much focus in recent years on redundant men: rising divorce rate, pension difficulties and poverty suggest serious issues for women.

SMEs: more focus on incentives for small businesses, so often without training budgets, HR expertise or staff pension schemes.

Flexible working: support for increased flexibility and imagination about terms and conditions of work to suit personal circumstances.

Trades Unions need to become a more important partner in retention.

Advice and guidance is as important for those in work as for those who are outside the labour market and looking for a change. Workplace guidance is a concept which has yet to be realised for most people.

Whole lives: handling all aspects of life including families, caring, communities and changing attitudes to work-life balance impacts on retention. Taking them into account does not mean reduced commitment to work; rather, the evidence shows strong commitment as one of the best features of older employees.

Work stereotypes need confronting; someone's working past need not define their future working choices and options.

Age discrimination legislation will help create equal opportunities for training, recruitment and promotion and therefore retention.

(2) Returning to work

Individual barriers to choice: long breaks from work impact on a candidate's presentational skills and limits choice, pay levels and motivation. Advice and guidance are crucial to tackling these barriers.

Careers services are still seen as a service for young people and most older adults avoid them.

Acting quickly and avoiding delay in getting to grips with return to the job market is essential.

Book reviews

East meets West

This handbook is in itself a cross-over phenomenon. It blends and contrasts traditional Western, mostly USA-based, theories of career development (Krumboltz, Spokane, Lent, Holland) with traditional Indian insights. Thus, the four Indian concepts of life-span development, in some respects mirror those of Donald Super's career rainbow; life is seen as a journey:

- * *Brahmacharya Ashrama* (learning, preparation)
- * *Grahastha Ashrama* (family, personal career)
- * *Vanaprastha Ashrama* (serve society, not for personal gain)
- * *Sanyasa Ashrama* (spiritual service of mankind).

Clearly, this adds a much needed value-based, spiritual and societal dimension to the more individualistic and market oriented Western career development models.

The meaning of work, and individualism vs. collectivism offer other interesting contrasts, as do the critical observations concerning the use of tests – as seen from another culture's perspective. Yet, the appendix of the book presents a number of 'Systems and testing devices for career counselling'. In their 'Career Preparation Process Model', the authors introduce 'The Career Discovery Equation', which is a 4-step model. This reflects the tradition of a step-by-step, rational choice model, and is thus somewhat Western in its approach. Yet it appears in an Indian handbook: an example of cultural cross-over. Such contrasts make this book a highly interesting read. It gives voice and insight into non-Western approaches.

Arulmani, G. & Nag-Arulmani, S. (2004). *Career Counselling. A handbook*. New Delhi: Tata Mc Graw-Hill Publishing. ISBN 0-07-048308-6

After the Tsunami, December 2004, Gideon Arulmani wrote in a personal email: 'A number of our project areas, friends and relatives have been affected. Some of the schools in which we work have been closed down and converted as shelters for those rendered homeless. Things are all in a state of upheaval and confusion just now. We are putting together a counselling programme that will address the psychological outcomes of loss and grief amongst children and youth in the affected areas'.

WATCH: Handbook for group guidance

This handbook is a spin-off the EU Leonardo da Vinci project 'Spiderweb' (see www.spiderweb-as.net). It deals with guidance work in groups to prevent early school leaving. In groups of 6-10 students, the WATCH programme provides 14 sessions and a follow-up session on:

Introduction, Study skills/managing your time, Stress, Anxiety, Procrastination, Lifestyles, Study skills/making notes, Peers, Strengths and Weaknesses, Health, Internet, Decision Making, Self-esteem, Future, and Follow-up.

Volunteering and mentoring roles are both positive in their own right as well as potential stepping-stones to paid work.

Work trials: there is scope to increase work trials and shorter-term placements to test out return to work without risk to benefits, particularly for those on sickness benefits.

Age differences: issues are different for those in their early 50s, mid-60s or into their 70s. It is not feasible to refer to over-50s as a single group.

More resources: www.thirdagers.net/resource.htm

All sessions are described in detail, including activities and exercises, as are topics such as the selection of participants, the facilitator's role, the planning, etc. The programme was tested in Iceland, Ireland, and Slovakia, and the handbook is thus a remarkable result of international co-operation. The three dedicated Icelandic authors stress the importance of the preventive aspects of guidance. So much guidance is like a fire brigade racing to put out fires. But prevention is better than cure.

The book is obtainable from asigurda@khi.is, bjorg@ru.is, and siggahj@isl.is

Sigurdardóttir, A., Birgisdóttir, B. & Jónsdóttir, S.H. (2004). *Watch. What alternatives? Thinking – Coping – Hoping. Handbook for Facilitators when Assisting Learners in Groups*. Reykjavik: Svansprent. ISBN 99799483-3-7

Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers

This joint publication of the European Commission and OECD has just been published in English and French. An initiative of the Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance, the handbook contains a range of policy options to meet national, regional and local needs across the education, training and employment sectors. The handbook is divided into four sections: the first and second sections concern the improvement of services for different target groups of young people, adults. The third section considers the issue of improving access. The fourth section considers transversal topics such as quality assurance and leadership that are relevant for all target groups. Each of the 14 chapters is organised as follows: challenges facing policy makers; questions that policy makers need to reflect on; policy options; and good examples of policies. The handbook costing 24 euro can be obtained from:

http://publications.eu.int/others/sales_agents_en.html and from

http://oecdpublications.gfi-nb.com/isroot/OECDBookShop/Static_html/ab_8.htm

Spanish and German versions of the handbook will be published in January by OPOCE, the European Commission's publication office (the first http address above). Overview/executive summaries of the handbook can be downloaded in other languages in 2005 from: <http://oecdpublications.gfi-nb.com/isroot/OECDBookShop.storefront/> and place career guidance in the search box. Informal approaches have been made by countries (Norway, Finland, Portugal, Spain - Catalonia) to OECD and to the Commission to have the handbook translated and published in their languages at their countries' cost.

Education and Training 2010: Reforming Guidance and Counselling in Europe - Changing Policies, Systems and Practices

This 8 page briefing document for policy makers, managers of services, practitioners and researchers has just been published in English, French and German by the European Commission. It describes recent developments in the field of lifelong guidance at European level; provides the political context for such development; outlines priorities for action and progress achieved to date; and gives useful references. It is available free from the Vocational Training Policy Unit, DG EAC, European Commission, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Web-based guidance: Ariadne

The Guidelines produced as a result of the Ariadne (EU)project, anticipate a dual readership: career guidance practitioners, and their clients or end-users. The practitioners will want to work out how to integrate guidance tools currently available on the web into their existing practice; end-users will want to use the web-based tools to progress their career planning. The Guidelines considers the use of web-based tools from a user perspective. The following chapter plots the range of possible services, and questions the rationale for web delivery and the skills base needed. The chapter on design presents the issues for consideration when developing a web-based tool and addresses the issue of social inclusion in both designing for wide access and being aware of limits to access. The penultimate chapter surveys the underpinning theory which may (or may not) be evident in the available tools. The final chapter considers the ethical aspects of designing, accessing and integrating web-based tools in guidance practice.

Ghinea, D. (Ed), Carey, M., Cogoi, C., La Gro, N., Lasite, C., Mjörnheden, T., Mulvey, M.R., Pop, V., Stenered, R., Tang, H. & Valandro, P. (2004). *Ariadne: Guidelines for web-based guidance*. Bucarest: Centre for Adult Education.

Conferences

FEDORA Summer University, July, 13-17, 2005 Nicosia, Greece.

'Knowledge an Transition: Challenges for Guidance and Counselling within the context of Globalization and the enlarged European Union'.

Abstract submission deadline March 1, 2005. Contact. Paula Ferrer-Sama. FEDORA Summer University Program committee. pferrer@edu.uned.es Info at <http://www.nuim.ie/careers/2005cypruswelcome.htm>

International Conference, September 14-16, 2005, Lisbon, Portugal

'Careers in Context: New Challenges and Tasks for Guidance and Counselling'

The abstract submission deadline is 31 JAN 2005. Participants who wish to propose contributions have three alternatives: oral presentation, workshop, or poster. Proponents need to email the abstract submission form, available from the conference webpage. Contact: Helena Rebelo Pinto, Chair of the Conference, rebelopinto@iop.ul.pt Website. www.aiospconference2005.pt

International Conference, April 6-8, 2006, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico

"Guidance - Alternatives of Support for the Human Development "

In Cuernavaca, state of Morelos - South of Mexico City - this conference will analyse alternative aspects of career development and present alternative methods and ways of different guidance programmes.

Conference languages: Spanish, English (and French if participation is sufficient).

Organiser: Autonomous University of the State Morelos UAEM, Cuernavaca.

Contact: Daniel Pellycer. Email: pellycer@buzon.uaem.mx

International Conference, August 23-25, 2006, Copenhagen, Denmark

'Cross-over: Guidance in Transition'

Cross-over exists in art (fusion music), in food (fusion kitchen), and in other cultural phenomena, such as language, ethnicity, and gender. In a global society, cultures mix. This also applies to career guidance which faces the challenges of becoming increasingly:

- cross-cultural: across cultural barriers
- cross-national: across national boundaries
- cross-medial: across different media, including various forms of ICT
- cross-methodological: across and beyond well-established guidance methods, including philosophy

This is what this conference is about: *cross-over*.

Pre PDI (Professional Development Institute) on Philosophical Counselling.

Organiser: Nordic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, NFSY. Contact: www.nfsy.org

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