



«Self-empowerment of guidance advisors and VET trainers for the promotion of social inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and adults in career transition».

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From Self-empowerment to empowering actions aimed at fostering social and labour integration and inclusion of asylum seekers, refugees and other vulnerable or disadvantaged target-groups: integrative pluralistic strategies and practices

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Ekaterini Anagnostopoulos, Aspic Lavoro



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A common European Legacy: Transnational strategic partnerships across centuries



Was heißt sic im Denken orientieren?

(1786)

What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

A common European Legacy: Transnational strategic partnerships across centuries

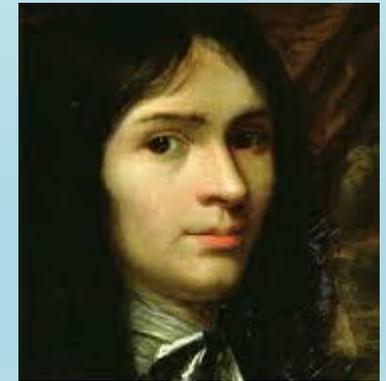


Règles pour la direction de l'esprit
(1629)

Regulae ad directionem ingenii

Rules for the direction of the mind

René Descartes (1596 - 1650)



René Descartes
Meditations on First Philosophy



A common European Legacy: Transnational strategic partnerships across centuries

«The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled»

On listening to lectures

Περί του ακούειν

Πλούταρχος



«What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality»

Plutarch (46-120 ca.)

The European Legacy: a Refugee and European Mobility «beneficiary» *ante litteram*.

«Investire tutte le facoltà da la natura per operare numero delle intelligenze



e le forze che abbiamo ottenuto bene e mettere a frutto e che abbiamo».

Giordano Bruno (1548 – 1600)

«Invest the totality of faculties and forces we have obtained from Nature to operate well and make our intelligences bear fruit in quantity»*.

Giordano Bruno, a philosopher, persecuted for his ideas and writings on cosmology, he wandered Europe as a traveller philosopher, lecturing in various Universities. He suggested:

- ❖ **Education for all.**
- ❖ **Removing obstacles such as individual, social and economic disadvantages.**

**Translation E.A.*

Broadening horizons in a global perspective: speech pronounced by Muhammad Yunus during the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony in 2006

«A human being comes to this world very well equipped, not only to take care of him/herself, but also to contribute in enhancing the wellbeing of this planet as a whole.

Some have the fortune to be able to explore their potentialities, in a certain way, but many others will never have, in their life, such an opportunity to unfold the special gift they were born with [...] and the world is thus deprived of their creativity and their contribution».

Source: Yunus M, 2007 (translation E.A. from the text in Italian).

Personal epistemology and self-empowerment

- ❑ Implications of personal epistemology in *self-empowerment* processes.
- ❑ Focus on orienting/guiding one's own intellect and thoughts
- ❑ Reflect on our peculiar position in our organisation, our career stage



Learning outcomes and gains

- ❖ An increased awareness and confidence in identifying, selecting, transferring, integrating and adapting practices, tools, methods (or elements and/or parts of those) in one's work activities, organisation of belonging and broader contexts.
- ❖ An increased motivation to reflect upon the complexity of the topics discussed and to promote change even in presence of challenges.
- ❖ A broader perspective on potentialities, possibilities and usability of suggestions received, experiences, contributions and practices exchanged originating from different disciplines, sectors, European Countries, cultural contexts, etc.
- ❖ An enriched intercultural insight on the European heritage and legacy of culture, thought and their connections with our project's topics.

- ❖ Career counseling practices (and related actions) with highly diversified **vulnerable target-groups** presenting specific needs and challenges while at the same time the same bear the complexity/multiplicity of identities, selves, roles and cultural/personal/social belongings.
- ❖ A **Cultural mosaic** recognizes multiple identity indicators
- ❖ Unique and varied combinations of cultural identities
- ❖ Customise interventions taking into account the *counselee* preferences (in terms of setting, methods, priorities) and resources, etc.

Differences and commonalities

The cultural mosaic (Chao, Moon, 2005):

Demographic

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Nationality
- ✓ Profession, organisation, sector

Geographical (characteristics of a territory or region that can shape collective identities)

Associative (formal and informal groups of identification of belonging)

- ✓ Family
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Interests

Pluralism and integration of methods, skills, tools/techniques

- ❑ Adapting or tailoring interventions to the specific person, target-group or organisation taking into account his particular context (Norcross, 2015)
- ❑ Transferring and incorporating skills, methods, techniques.
- ❑ Evidenced based methods to adapt interventions to the characteristics of the *counselee* and his/her context.

Integration

- ❑ Blending, eclecticism, integration of two different approaches, methods/systems (Prochaska, Norcross, 2014)
- ❑ One foundational system and integration of components/elements of different methods, systems into one's own/applied «one-system» or integrated method of work.

Vocational guidance/Career counselling relationships that work

Intervention adaptations (from the transtheoretical model of Prochaska, Norcross in clinical and behavior change work).

- Preferences
- Real time feedback
- Stages of change
- Reactance level (directive vs. non directive)
- Culture (in a broad sense)
- Coping style/strategies
- Matching across the process of guidance, counselling, orientation etc.

Vocational guidance/Career counselling relationships that work

EFFECTIVE ELEMENTS (Career counselling, vocational guidance)

- The collaborative alliance (relationship, agreement on goals, ...).
- Empathy, listening, focusing on strengths and resources
- Adapting the counselling/guidance relationship, setting to the individual
- Promote self-resiliency, self-determination, self-guidance

PROMISING ELEMENTS

- Positive regard, expectations
- Congruence
- Customization of tools, techniques, methods
- Feedback



Potency/benefits of having positive experiences (I)

- ❑ **Neurons that fire together wire together (Hebb, 2009 [1949].**
«When a circuit fires repeatedly, it can most likely become a default setting» (Bessel van der Kolk, 2014; cfr. Plutarch, Descartes)
- ❑ **Use it or lose it.** The neural circuits not actively engaged in task performance for an extended period of time begin to degrade (Kleims and Jones, 2008)
- ❑ **Use it or improve it.** Plasticity can be induced within specific brain regions through extended training (Kleims and Jones, 2008)
- ❑ **Regulation.** Important to help people regulate negative feeling, e.g. associated with trauma.

Potency/benefits of having positive experiences - II

- ❑ **Repetition.** Behavior dimension – to increase the likelihood of inducing lasting neural changes (involving also feeling and interpersonal dimensions).
- ❑ **Intensity and time dedicated.** Accumulative effects of learning processes through time (to consolidate with more stability wanted change. Allowing our mind to rest on the knowledge of good events, situations, experiences, intentions).
- ❑ **Transference.** Benefits in one region can bring benefits to other regions (Kleims and Jones, 2008). E.g. (Wilson: «relaxing the avoid-threat system can result in relaxing other regions of the brain»).

Source (adapted from): Michael Wilson, *Resource focused counselling and psychotherapy*, Routledge, London, 2017.

Tailoring career counselling to individual needs: A brief case history (I)

Action 1 – Individual career counselling with an asylum seeker: empowerment through personal resources and transversal skills valorisation

G., male, age 40, asylum seeker, arrived in Italy from a Western African Country.

- ❖ This counselling intervention took place in a Clinical Center for Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Rome where assessment was provided for their asylum application procedure.
- ❖ It implied cooperation with doctors, lawyers and translator/mediator.
- ❖ He had received medical-psychiatric diagnosis and was undergoing pharmacological treatment for severe depression symptoms.
- ❖ Successful integration of a career counselling/coaching personalised method (considerations and discussion).
- ❖ Reflections on challenges, aspects that may affect vocational guidance, career counselling.

Tailoring career counselling to individual needs: A brief case history (II)

Action 1 – Individual career counselling with an asylum seeker: empowerment through personal resources and transversal skills valorisation

- ❖ *Challenges:* only 5 sessions available.
- ❖ The procedure implied a clinical interview with a trained and experienced interpreter and collection of the counselee's history and «traumatic experience» in order to assess and certify psychological conditions.
- ❖ Effective integration of a career counselling/coaching personalised method (considerations).
- ❖ Reflections and considerations on challenges, aspects that affect vocational guidance, career counselling and also training counsellors and possibilities of skills enhancement.
- ❖ Career counselling and vocational guidance as a Socratic maieutic process

Vocational guidance/Career counselling processes and relationships that work

- ❖ Gather client information as the career counselling process unfolds.
- ❖ Identify the *signature strengths* of the person (Seligman).
- ❖ Career behavior emerging from a life-long dynamic interaction between the person and his/her environment.

REFLECTIONS: STANDARDISATION VS. PERSONALISED APPROACH

- ❖ How to respond to seemingly contradictory or opposing needs, balancing the need for standardised and unified procedures within EU (which is a trend in EU processes concerning handling the migration issue).
- ❖ Information about qualifications, education, etc. the role of interpreters.
- **GIVE CONSISTENCY TO POLICIES AND CALIBRATE TO SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS**
- ❖ Within the broad population of «asylum seekers» or «refugees» almost all other «target-group definitions» may be represented (age, vulnerability – specific interviewing and processing procedures – EASO, education, culture, gender, etc).
- ❖ An integrative pluralistic approach can help to harmonise different needs, to make possible blending, co-existing, connecting separated/isolated of apparently contradictory or mutually exclusive activities, practices, efforts.
- ❖ Working with interpreter(s)/mediator(s).

Career counselling and vocational guidance for people with severe mental health problems

Programme 1 – Outpatient Career Counselling/vocational guidance

- ❑ **Target-group:** People with chronic mental health problems referred by a Public Service.
- ❑ **Age:** from 28 to 52

Living with their families or in shared apartments with other people in rehabilitation (after a period of resident rehabilitation in a community).

- ❑ **Number of sessions:** 3 per person. Length of each session: up to 75'.
- ❑ Examples of flexible adaptation to their needs and resources: e.g. **couple career counselling** for 6 sessions.
- ❑ **Participation:** free of charge.

Career counselling and vocational guidance for people with severe mental health problems

Programme 2 – in-house career counselling in residential rehabilitation contexts

- Intervention offered as a professional under the «Aspic Lavoro Summer Work in Progress Programme» – in two residential rehabilitation centers for adults and young adults with psychiatric issues.
- Participants' age:** between 18 to 40 (men and women with diversified issues and backgrounds).
- Each session:** flexible, length between 60' and 90' adapted to the capacity of each participant to experience interaction and benefit of the intervention.
- Participation was **free of charge**.

Career counselling and vocational guidance for people with severe mental health issues

What worked:

- Positive feedback, participants manifested curiosity and interest.
- Flexibility of the sessions: within the time dedicated *counselees* were free to come and go (as actually some did).
- Awareness raising on interests, potentialities, resources.
- The opportunity for participants to recall and narrate past experiences of mastery and competence.

What can be improved:

- To provide a higher number of sessions.
- To integrate with a variety of activities and/or settings.
- Involvement of families or significant others in complementary activities.

- ❑ Adapt interventions and tools or specific target-groups in specific contexts;
- ❑ Necessity of standardisation for broad populations. At the same time, take into account the differences and leverage on them.
- ❑ Research and meta-analysis on vocational guidance and career counselling effectiveness (the capacity to promote change).
- ❑ Keep in mind that a paradigm, construct, category or label is not the «thing» (or entity) itself (cfr. Shopenhauer, Jaspers, Husserl, Maxwell).
- ❑ A sufficiently structured frame and the possibility and flexibility to make this adaptation. *Directiveness vs. non directiveness*

Transversal skills and self-empowerment

Some major skills considered of paramount importance stemming from these experiences are those of

Adaptability and Flexibility

Cultural awareness and competence

Self-care/regulation

What about us (as practitioners, scholars, trainers, policy makers, project developers, etc.)?

To be able to identify other people's needs, resources, we need first to apply these same processes to ourselves, in our own life and work.

Skills development experiential training for workers in the asylum seeker/refugee reception field

«Flexible, dynamic boundaries and professional competence-effectiveness of workers in the asylum seeker/refugee reception and integration field»

- ❑ **Designed and implemented a training course** of 15 hours for 25 participants (different job profiles) working with refugees and asylum seekers (some of the participants were refugees themselves).
- ❑ Self-empowerment, handling and modulation of interpersonal boundaries, listening skills, conflicts handling, work effectiveness and transversal skills development
- ❑ Self-care, self-regulation and stress management

- in cooperation with Laura Liberati (Programma Integra), ASPIC trained career counsellor, November 2017, Rome.

About Career

- ❑ Career encompass the total constellation of life roles that we play.
- ❑ In order to manage our career effectively it is necessary to integrate the roles of life effectively.
- ❑ Careers as manifestations of our attempts at making sense out of our life experiences.
- ❑ Carer counselling practice ever changing and evolving.
- ❑ Internal cognitive processes + External factors, society, culture, relationships that shape a person's career development.

Integrative pluralistic involvement, advise, consultation and action at multiple levels (I)

- ❑ A variety of networking activities of ASPIC LAVORO are the actualisation and implementation of an integrative pluralistic model of intervention at community, local, national, european and international level.
- ❑ Including initiatives addressed directly to people facing career related transitions, their families and practitioners (seminars, workshops, conferences, dissemination and awareness raising)

Integrative pluralistic involvement, advise, consultation and action at multiple levels (II)

It implies promoting actions that create connections and bridges, establish networks at multiple-levels:

- ❖ between people, groups
- ❖ career and vocational guidance practitioners
- ❖ organizations, institutions
- ❖ other stakeholders

A transdisciplinary mode to promote transferability of knowledge, findings, experience, to facilitate the establishment of informal/formal support networks, cooperation and practice exchange community building, increase social inclusion.

Integrative and pluralistic involvement, advise, consultation and action at multiple levels (III)

Involvement of ASPIC LAVORO in strategic networks:

- ❖ EUROGUIDANCE ITALY NATIONAL DISSEMINATION NETWORK (since 2015).
- ❖ Civil Society Consultation Forum of the EASO (EUROPEAN ASYLUM SUPPORT OFFICE) an EU Agency now becoming a fully fledged European Agency, since 2016.
- ❖ EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM (Brussels), since 2016.

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Thank you for your participation, attention,
active reflection and exchange!



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