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CAREER GUIDANCE MODEL FOR ARMENIA

Contemporary societies exist in the conditions of globalization and rapid social change. Globalization in the context of career guidance means at least two interrelated processes. Firstly, the emphasis is primarily on the **individual person as a unit**, and not as a **member of a group**. Secondly, the society becomes a multiple set of **networks** rather than a **group** bounded by its state borders.

In the life altered by globalization and rapid social change jobs for life have been replaced by more dynamic forms of working and people are forced to take more active part in the construction and development of their own careers. In the current era the meaning of productive activity, work, and career has changed as well. “Career” no longer refers to particular pathways through work or to an occupational title. “Career” is the sequence and variety of work roles, which one undertakes through a life course. More broadly, “career” embraces life roles, leisure activities, learning and work.

In the past, making career decisions was considered by many as a straightforward event. One had to collect information about himself or herself, information about the potential working place and put it together to make what was often a once and for all choice. In this new climate, individuals need to exhibit characteristics such as

adaptability, flexibility, self-initiation and collaboration to accommodate and thrive in workplaces, or to create work for themselves (Australian blueprint: 10).

Kay Worlds: Career guidance, Career guidance, professional orientation, Traditional society, Model of career guidance, Learning-to-learn, Entrepreneurship, Career and enterprise, Personal development, Work and society.

Career guidance is a lifelong service and is not just about work after the learning process, but rather the two are interrelated. “The term career guidance is replacing the term vocational guidance in high-income countries, vocational guidance is focused upon the choice of occupation and is distinguished from educational guidance, which focuses upon choices of courses of study. Career guidance brings the two together and stresses the interaction between learning and work” (Hansen 2006: 1). The most comprehensive and widely accepted definition of Career guidance was provided by OECD (2004). Career guidance in this document is commonly understood as set of services refers to services and activities intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Career guidance

helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematizing it, and making it available when and where people need it. (OECD 2004: 10) . In other words, the career guidance is an inclusive term that has been used to describe a range of activities that help people to move from a general understanding of life and work to a specific understanding of the realistic life, learning and work options that are open to them.

Career guidance is not only about work, but also about better fulfilment of people's lives. At the same time it is about both individuals and societies. "Career guidance serves not only individual citizens in finding paths both in employment and life, but also serves the purpose of making society more cohesive and economy more prosperous (ibid 3). Thus it becomes an important issue of public policy.

As a matter of public policy it is not only of theoretical importance, but is also a practical one. Because of the scope of career guidance, the state cannot take responsibility for providing these services alone, due to the heavy monetary burden and insufficient feedback from the customers. The reliance on the state alone without participation of different stake holders and social partners will make career guidance service in a long run unsustainable and inefficient because of the growing cost, low efficiency and inadequate feedback from the customers. There is also a risk of duplication between different ministries (e.g.) Ministry

of Education and Science and Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, because the former are more interested in flexibility and growth, while the latter are more occupied with the social inclusion and equality of access. The question of economic growth, human resources and cost of the supporting the system makes Ministry of Economy and Finance an important participant as well.

The focus in the current era in terms of career guidance practice should be not on the interests of a particular group providing services, advisory bodies, etc., but rather on the interests of the individual citizen as such. It does not mean that the service providers, educational authorities and the like are unimportant, but rather that the interests of individuals can be better served through the networks of their interactions, or more precisely, through the formal and informal connections of stakeholders and social partnerships. Only in cooperation can the interests of individuals be better served. According to the OECD, EU, World Bank, and other interested institutions understanding career guidance as an individual-oriented service, the effects of which are of great benefit to both society and economy, which in turn makes it a private as well as public good (Schober & Jenschke, 2006: 5).

Career guidance is not a service for people as passive receivers, but rather an empowering tool. Career guidance therefore refers to the pathways in life in which competencies are learned and/or used. The term covers life wide experiences both formal (education, work) and informal (home, community) (Company 2006: 3).

European common terms of reference (2005) base their principles on the centrality of the citizen, which is not influenced by the provider, institutional and funding interest in providing career guidance. Only this way will it provide empowerment for citizens. The key to the empowerment (motivation)

moment is in assisting citizens to become competent at planning and managing their learning and career paths and the transitions therein (12).

As stated above, career guidance is different from vocational orientation. Therefore, professional orientation, the term used in the Soviet Union, is not appropriate for the current globalised world.

The model of career guidance for Armenia should take into account the local cultural and socio-economic context.

Local context:

1 Soviet heritage

Almost two decades ago Armenia was a part of the Soviet Union. Since then Armenia has taken its own path, particularly after 2004 when the broad direction towards accepting the European Union terms of reference has been chosen.

The lessons from the USSR, nevertheless, should not be forgotten. Due to its educational system the almost universal literacy has been achieved and maintained (TIMSS results for Armenia). At the same time in some economically developed countries it is still the problem and thus the return to “basics” is often viewed as illumination of illiteracy and innumeracy. Literacy became recently the major focus of the schooling systems in the economically developed countries. Reflecting the basis of achieving literacy and numeracy it is focus of returning to “basics”, “basic skills” etc. This was also the idea of Lisbon meeting that stressed the importance of acquiring basic skills. This emphasis on “basic skills” was challenged (2004), and there was a shift to replace them by “key competencies” because former are too restrictive and focused on survival. This return to basic skills was considered as a liability in development of qualities important for individuals to acquire in order to live and work in the market oriented state in era of globalization and rapid social change.

Therefore, “survival” in terms of alleviation of illiteracy and innumeracy is not an issue for Armenia.

2 Survival vs. growth

Economic survival, however, currently is an important matter. One of the respondents said that for the majority of Armenian people it is problematic to think long term when the issue of *survival* is paramount. Career guidance is not about “survival” because it is based not only on short term but also on the medium and long-term goals. Economic “survival” becomes an important issue in Armenia and insufficient payment rather than lack of work becomes the major reason for migration. In spite of that career guidance should focus not only on immediate tasks and rationalization of the current system, but also investing into long term growth both in economic and social sense.

Survival skills, however, have both positive and negative characteristics. Survival demands adaptability from people, which can be viewed as its positive side, but at the same time slow pace of economic and social improvement it may discourage personal initiative to evolve and progress (ILO, 2006: 4). If work options are limited and working does not allow to support the family and individuals operate largely on the survival level, career guidance should be seen as a way to empower people and to stimulate an economic growth.

3 Traditional society: Generational issues

In Armenian society parents often excessively supervise their children well into their adulthood. Parents largely make decisions for their children, and as a result children are not developing values such as self-reliance, independent decision making, problem solving, adaptability to change etc. Children are commonly not encouraged to try different things and learn from their mistakes.

Therefore, to make the career guidance system work parents should be taken on board. The encouragement of the lifelong acquisition of the career management skills, according to the Council of the European Union (Resolution, 2008, Annex: 5), should include **parents** to become involved in guidance issues.

Traditional society: Gender issues

Getting a university degree is of paramount importance irrespective if there is any employment or not in that particular field. This view implies that a female with the university degree would be a better mother for her child. The evidence, however, does not support this assumption. In the UNISEF Education research paper analysing the results of TIMSS test (2007) in Armenia the correlation between level of education of the mother and educational performance of her child was found to be on the lower end among Central and Eastern European countries as well as CIS countries (112).

Boys and girls are represented equally in the higher education institutions. The dynamics observed in the private higher education system during the last four years indicates that the number of girls is two times bigger than the number of boys. At first sight, this is a quite positive picture. However, difficulties occur with the finding a job, as rating of state educational institutions is still quite high. Moreover, the girls who have graduated from the private higher education institutions face difficulties in finding their place in the labor market. (112)

The legal basis for transition from study to work is not sufficient

There is little understanding that the processes of work and study are intertwined. Employers often require people to have a university degree because the supply of people with university degrees is too

high on the market. They demand potential employees to be young and experienced at the same time. This suggests that those potential employees should be between 25 and 30 years old. However, getting experience is not an easy task. The legal and political basis for internships, work-placed learning, practice, apprenticeship and voluntary work is insufficient.

6 The school context

The role of education, and more specifically, of the primary education in the career guidance cannot be underestimated. In the European Union countries the role of primary education in the career development has recently been acknowledged, but the practical results are yet to be noticed (Cedefop, 2008: 34).

The career choice as a development process, which parallels with the development of the self-concept was extensively explored (e.g. Holland, 1966; Gottfredson, 1981; Helwig, 2001). As a development process, career choice “would be the result of a process starting with individual’s early fantasy choices, followed by tentative choices and then by realistic choices” (Borghans and Golsteyn, 2008: 290).

The children at the primary level have to be educated to become autonomous citizens later in their life. To be able to choose future careers children should be taught to make such choices. In terms of the current curricula there is a tendency in some schools to reduce or completely withdraw hours for arts and music and increase hours for mathematics and foreign language (usually English). While numeracy and knowledge of foreign languages is important, it should not come at a price. It is important to state that studying arts provides an important basis for developing design skills, and aesthetic intelligence, but most importantly those disciplines develop creativity.

Creativity is an asset for a student helping him/her to find a place in the world, trying all possibilities and creating his or her own ways of dealing with the rapidly changing world. Creativity is important for a person to become responsible for his or her own time planning. Therefore, it is important in the curricula to introduce topics related to the time management, choices and responsibilities for their own life. Students in primary classes should better understand themselves, promoting self-reliance, autonomy, and broadly speaking- individuality. Learning experiences should not be overly prescriptive so the students should follow a step-by-step approach but rather focus on the “impossible”, on “creative” in order to open children up to new experiences and opportunities.

In its recent document Cedefop (2009) suggests that “the 2009 European year of creativity and innovation (EYCI) aims to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation as key competences for personal, social and economic development” (16).

In the economically developed countries there is a significant proportion of self-employed people, where people believe in their own power to solve problems (entrepreneurs). It is important to encourage children to experiment, work on their own projects either individually or in teams, rather than competing in how much a person can memorise information or get better grades. Involvement in a project provides a person with an opportunity to realize in practice what he or she had in mind when starting the project. The person learns how to be flexible and adaptable, responsive to emerging issues. Also it teaches students how to become successful in their own endeavours.

Armenia did not participate in the PISA test, and therefore there is no comparable

data on the practical application of learning in comparison with their peers from other countries.

There are still some teachers and principals focused too much on the content and overload the curriculum. Teachers do not take into account cross-subject connections. They are trained and experienced along traditional subject lines. Even deputy principals are sometimes not aware of them. The curriculum should be more oriented towards eight competences proposed for the European Union Countries.

European “key competences”

In March 2000, the Lisbon European Council set a new strategic goal for the European Union: to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. To achieve this goal it was viewed as important to provide “the new basic skills” through the lifelong learning process.

In 2004 it was acknowledged that the term “basic skills” becomes too restrictive, because it is generally taken to refer to basic literacy and numeracy and as such are viewed as “survival” or “life” skills (Implementation, 2004: 3). The term “basic” implies depends on situation and that mastering “basic skill” enough to solve problem in one situation might not be applicable in another situation (ibid: 4).

The survival issue has a dual character, economic as well as existential. For example if the focus of educational reform is on the development of basic skills, it is about survival. Therefore European Union moved from the focus on basic skills to key competencies, because they are not restrictive.

A new notion of key competencies was introduced by the European Parliament and the Council:

“Key competencies represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory schooling or training, and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning”.

(Implementation 2004: 6)

The eight competencies are:

Communication in the mother tongue

Communication in a foreign language

Mathematical literacy and basic competencies in science and technology

Digital competence

Learning- to- learn

Interpersonal and civic competencies

Entrepreneurship

Cultural expression

While all of the above competencies contribute to career guidance, the two are specifically important for this purpose: **learning- to- learn** and **entrepreneurship**. Both competencies contribute to **welcoming change and self- expression**.

Learning-to-learn means ability to manage one's time effectively, to solve problems, to acquire, process, evaluate and assimilate new knowledge, and to apply new knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts. In more general terms, learning-to-learn contributes strongly to managing one's own career path.

Knowledge:

Knowledge and understanding of one's preferred learning methods, the strengths and weaknesses of one's skills and qualifications.

Knowledge of available education and training opportunities and how different decisions during the course of education and training lead to different careers

Skills:

Effectively self-manage learning and careers.

Ability to communicate as part of learning process by using appropriate means (intonation, gesture, mimicry, etc.) [**drama** lessons] to support oral communication as well as by understanding and producing various multimedia messages (written or spoken language, sound, music etc) [**music** lessons]. [**arts** to support graphic understanding].

Attitudes:

self-concept that supports willingness to change and confidence in one's capability to succeed.

Adaptability and flexibility

Entrepreneurship has an active and a passive component: it comprises both the propensity to induce changes oneself and the ability to overcome, support and adapt to innovation brought about by external factors. Entrepreneurship involves taking responsibility for one's actions, positive or negative, developing a strategic vision, setting objectives and meeting them, and being motivated to succeed. (8)

Knowledge:

Knowledge of available opportunities in order to identify those suited to one's own personal, professional and/or business activities

Skills

Skills for project development and implementation

Ability to work co-operatively and flexibly as part of a team

Being able to identify one's personal strengths and weaknesses

Ability to assess and take risks as and when warranted [in math- estimation]

Attitudes:

Disposition to show initiative (18)

Principles for career guidance

Proposed principles are based on the

current understanding of career guidance, the Armenian context and the realities of the European Competencies.

Equips young people to make relevant career choices across their lifespan

Starts in the early phase of schooling

Learning requires the active involvement of the student throughout life

Learning is both an individual and a group process; participants learn from each other

Participants learn best when they are treated as active learners with valid opinions, values and experience, not as passive recipients of information

Participants learn best when they are part of a learning environment that encourages sharing, trust and reflection

Provides young people with the opportunity to develop positive attitudes and resilience towards change, and the knowledge and skills to manage recurrent career transitions.

Individuals need to **proactively design and manage** their preferred futures

Individuals need to be empowered/confident to design and manage their preferred futures

Reinforces the concept that a “job for life” is now largely outdated with peoples’ careers taking many forms.

A wide array of personal, family, social and environmental factors shape the development of career competence

Promotes the notion of lifelong learning.

Communities will prosper if individuals are empowered to make informed life, learning and work decisions

Career development is a **lifelong individual-oriented journey**

Legal basis is required to support internships, work-placed learning, apprentices that are essential part of career guidance.

Model of career guidance for Armenia

Career guidance model acknowledged the critical role of work in our lives. The factors that are relevant to a constantly changing world of work and that influence the development of the model include:

personal interests, values and beliefs

workplace systems and reforms

technological advances that link economies and workplaces around the world

global market demands for productivity and sustainability

legal, financial and ethical considerations underpinning the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees (Career development and Work education in Year 10).

The model is developed on the basis of the analysis of the best international practice and it is contextualised for Armenia. It is proposed as a five-stage model starting at the primary school level and going to adult learning stage. The model is organised around knowledge and understanding presented through the concepts of:

- *Career and enterprise,*
- *Personal development,*
- *Work and society.*

Knowledge and understanding incorporated in the model along with career awareness and experiential career exploration enables young people to construct their preferred career. This model acknowledged that learning about career development and work needs to **be proactive**; and the students/adults need to develop an appreciation of and the need for the lifelong learning. The main ways of learning is inquiry based and includes investigating, communicating, participating, and reflecting.

| Stage 1 Grades 1– 4 | Stage 2 Grades 5– 8 | Stage 3 Grades 9 –11 | Stage 4 VET colleges and Universities | Stage 5 After school or formal training |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| For students | | | | For graduates and Unemployed |
| <p>Use the existing subject My life and me. Project-based learning that focuses on development of: self-image; abilities for building positive relationships with others; independent decision making and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>Introduce modules The world of work Jobs our parents have Etc.</p> <p>Invite parents to talk about their jobs Excursions; Employment Centres Nearest industry sites; Services Tourism Heavy industry/ engineering Food processing, etc.</p> | <p>Nominate a teacher in charge of career guidance in each school (to reduce her teaching load) and to establish a career guidance point in each school.</p> <p>Organise counselling for the students helping them to link life-long learning to personal development and career aspirations; use tests to measure personality type and occupations that fit this personality profile; workshops on Interview skills</p> <p>Develop job searching skills – how to locate and effectively use career information.</p> <p>Work with parents – information nights, job fairs, etc. to update on labour market needs and career opportunities</p> | <p>Establish a Career development and Work Education learning through two components:</p> <p>Context based (a semester length units based around a particular topic, theme):</p> <p>Designing your future (Developing a career plan, learning to write a resume/CV; application letters and address selection criteria);</p> <p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship (EU competence Entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and activities);</p> <p>Learning to learn (EU competence)</p> <p>Navigating the workplace (Legislation and policy to do with work, social impact of work and types of workplaces);</p> <p>Jobs, jobs, jobs (Business and economic systems and the impact of technological and environmental change)</p> <p>Integrated within curriculum:</p> <p>Subjects taught use workplace contexts and aim to develop all eight EU competencies;</p> <p>Recognised structured workplace or community-based learning programs</p> <p>Use a portfolio as a tool to collect all career-related materials and plans; continue work with parents</p> | <p>Establish industry mentoring programs</p> <p>Mentoring is a strategy for self-development and skill development where an experienced professional offers knowledge, insight and resources to the mentee.</p> <p>The goal of the Program is to assist students' transition from study to work by facilitating in-depth understanding of potential employing organisations, work roles and workplaces relevant to their studies.</p> <p>At the start of the Program, participants draw up a Mentoring Agreement, listing the activities they plan to undertake during the mentoring period (up to three months).</p> | <p>Use the Employment Centres</p> <p>To improve on abilities to seek, obtain/create and maintain work</p> <p>To provide information about organisations and industries</p> <p>To evaluate type of work involved in a particular role</p> <p>To establish career paths within professional field</p> <p>To identify skills and experience required for a particular field or profession</p> <p>To organise experience through paid or unpaid work</p> <p>To refer participants to other relevant contacts within the field or profession</p> |

In suggested model the first three stages are organised by schools; VET colleges and universities are in charge of stage 4, employment centres are implementing stage 5. It is assumed that the European Union competencies for education need to be incorporated into the curriculum Grades 1 – 11, and that two competencies specific for career development – entrepreneurship and learning to learn provide a basis for context-based learning at stage 3. Learning about career is embedded in existing subject (My life and me, stage 1), achieved through a separate workshops and learning units (stages 2, 3 and 5) and spread across the curriculum (stage 4).

Career guidance provides students with a context for their school and after school learning, developing skills, knowledge and attitudes to make career decisions. Through all stages students are encouraged to:

- develop awareness of themselves and learning, work and life;
- learn how to locate and effectively use information;
- make responsible learning, work and life decisions;
- understand the world of work and its relationship to the economy and society.

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ԴՄԻՏՐԻ ՄՈՐԱԽՈՎՍԿԻ

Լա Տրոբ համալսարանի պրոֆեսոր, Մելբուրն Վիկտորյա, Ավստրալիա

Ժամանակակից աշխարհի գլոբալիզացման ենթատեքստում մասնագիտական կողմնորոշում նշանակում է երկու գործընթացների համակցում: Առաջին հերթին անհատն ընկալվում է որպես առանձին միավոր և ոչ թե խմբի անդամ, և երկրորդ՝ հասարակությունը դառնում է ընդհանուր հետաքրքրությունների ցանցով կապված մարդկանց բնօրրան, որը սահմաններ չի ճանաչում: Անցյալում է մնացել այն կարծրատիպը, որ մասնագիտության ընտրությունը պայմանավորվում էր միայն գիտելիքների որոշակի պաշարի ձեռքբերմամբ, արդյունավետ գործունեությամբ և աշխատանքով: Այժմ, այդ ամենին ի լրումն առաջնային են համարվում հարմարվողականությունը, ճկունությունը, ինքնակառավարումը: Այս և շատ այլ հարցերի ու հիմնախնդիրների մասին է խոսում հեղինակը, ուսումնասիրելով հայկական իրականությունը՝ առաջարկում է մասնագիտական կողմնորոշման մոդել:

МОДЕЛЬ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ ОРИЕНТАЦИИ ДЛЯ АРМЕНИИ

ДМИТРИЙ МОРАХОВСКИ

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В контексте всеобщей глобализации современного мира профессиональная ориентация означает совмещение двух процессов. В первую очередь индивидуум воспринимается как отдельная единица, а не часть группы, и, во-вторых, общество становится сообществом людей, связанных сетью общих интересов, которое не знает границ. В прошлом осталось мнение о том, что выбор профессии обоснован только накоплением определенного запаса знаний, эффективной деятельностью и работой. Сегодня, как дополнение ко всему этому, первостепенными считаются приспособляемость, гибкость, самоуправление. К этому и другим вопросам обращается автор. Рассматривая армянскую действительность, он предлагает для нее модель профессиональной ориентации.

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