

**IAEVG Conference: *Career Guidance for Social Justice, Prosperity and Sustainable Employment – Challenges for the 21st Century*,
Mannheim, Germany, 3-6 October 2012**

On 3-6 October 2012 an annual conference of the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance took place in Mannheim, Germany. The event was organised in collaboration with the University of Applied Labour Studies (Hochschule der Bundesagentur für Arbeit – HdBA) and funded by the German Federal Employment Agency in Mannheim. In 2012, the University, which trains counsellors, celebrated its 40th anniversary, the fact highlighted in a special session chaired by Professor Bernd-Joachim Ertelt. The conference was held under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the National Forum for Lifelong Guidance in Education, and the Federal Employment Agency. The organisers defined the broad theme of the conference: *Career Guidance for Social Justice, Prosperity and Sustainable Employment – Challenges for the 21st Century* and invited contributions in the following eight more specific thematic areas within it:

1. Career Guidance in a Globalised World,
2. Career Guidance for Skills Development, Functioning Labour Markets, and Social Inclusion,
3. Providing Career Management Skills – New All-Age Services and Diversity-Related Concepts,
4. Theories for a Better Practice: New Scientific and Research Approaches in Career Guidance and Counselling,
5. Modern Technology for Future-Oriented Inclusive Guidance Services and Delivery,
6. Quality Development in Career Guidance; Competences, Qualifications, Ethical and Professional Behaviour of Guidance Practitioners,
7. Measuring the Immeasurable: Outcomes and Impact of Career Guidance and Counselling Interventions – “Prove it works”,
8. Policy for Coherent and Transparent Guidance Systems: National and International Developments and Challenges.

The conference brought together 500 participants from 40 countries. The scientific programme was very varied: presentations and discussions took place in four plenary sessions, 18 symposia and over 40 thematic and poster sessions. Participants could also participate in study visits at Audi and the Career Information Center at the Local Employment Agency.

In his opening lecture “Pessimism of the Intellect, Optimism of the Will: Troubling the Relationship between Career Guidance and Social Justice” Professor Ronald G. Sultana (Malta) gave an inspiring philosophical and sociological introduction to the complex relationships between counselling and social justice issues. The next key-lecture by Professor Nancy Arthur (University of Calgary) also addressed the issue and contained an appeal to career guidance practitioners to adapt their activities to the current needs of the labor market and, at the same time, to consider the possibility of human rights advocacy. Professor Walter Müller (Mannheim Centre for European Social Research) and Professor Joachim Möller (Institute for Employment Research, Nuremberg) in their respective lectures: “Where are the Challenges for the Labor Market in the 21st Century?” and “(In-)Equity in Education – Sources and Challenges for Policy” discussed career guidance in a broader context of its interdependence with political decisions and economic policies thus showing how career counselling can tie in with the experience of other disciplines. Global threats were addressed also in panel discussions and symposiums. In the context of social justice, challenges related to career services quality were discussed in a multi-disciplinary perspective, which postulates that guidance development strategies drafted by policy makers in different countries should be informed not only by economic considerations but also by practitioners’ opinions and consultancy based on the results of career development research.

The simultaneously held to symposia and poster sessions represented the diversity of topics of the IAEVG conference. Traditionally, all the presentations entered the competition for the best poster. The first prize went to “Reliability in Vocational Guidance: a Longitudinal Case Study with the Berufsbilder-Test-BBT” a poster reporting a longitudinal study based on Martin Achtnich test presented by Giselle Müller-Roger Welter from Brazil.

The plenary session closing the conference was chaired by Professor Anthony G. Watts (UK). It was to a panel discussion attended by speakers from India, South Africa, New Zealand, Finland and Italy. In their view, IAEVG conferences are an important tool for the development of career guidance across the world. The meeting resulted in the establishment of a special section of the Association which aims to unite researchers and practitioners involved in the promotion of social justice on the basis of career counselling.

Despite the geographical proximity, only few speakers from Poland attended the IAEVG conference in Mannheim this time. In the thematic session „Common Aims – Different Approaches: Career Guidance Systems in Different Parts of the World,” Professor Alicja Kargulowa and Anna Bilon delivered the paper on “Career

Guidance in Poland – Theoretical Approaches and Practical Solutions”; and dr. Anna Paszkowska-Rogacz presented the results of the research project “High School Students Career Readiness vs. Their Temporal Orientation” in the session “Constructivism in Career Guidance Counselling – Theory and Practice.”

It is worth noting that the website of the conference is still active and has a lot of downloadable content – the presentation of abstracts and texts. It can be found at:

<http://www.iaevg-conference-2012-mannheim.com>

The next meeting of the IAEVG, titled “Career Counselling: a Human or a Citizen’s Right?” was scheduled for 2013 in Montpellier, France. Continuing in a way the debates of the 2012 event, the participants will tackle further important questions: “How can career counselling contribute to the construction of citizens who conceive their own human development as related to others’ developments and the common good?” and “Which public policies might be implemented for that purpose?”

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(Translated from Polish by Anna Paszkowska-Rogacz)